HOW TO HIDE THINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES

by Dennis Fiery

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Chapter One: How Can You Possibly Hide Things In Public Places?

Isn't this a contradiction in terms?

To be Public is to be open and available to all. Public places can be trespassed by anyone; public objects may be handled, inspected and used by anyone who comes across them. How can a thing be both public and hidden?

Simple. The public world is owned and controlled by private individuals, each with his own goal in mind. Telephone booths are public, yet they retain a degree of privateness because of the locks that keep their coin boxes closed, and the fact that money must be inserted to use them. They are publicly available for your use, but you're still playing under someone else's rules. You may touch the handset, but never the inner workings of the machine. You may open and close the doors, but you may not lock yourself in and live there. The owner controls use of his possessions.

All public things have a sense of controlled privacy to them. Park benches may be used, but never moved. Items can be dropped into a mailbox but never taken out. Vending machines only dispense goods for money. Traffic lights may be changed by the press of a button — but only if the master control program allows them to be changed.

It is this sense of privacy in the public world that leads to minor crimes such as vandalism, tunneling under fences to trespass,

computer hacking, and graffiti writing. All allow the violator to enlarge the realm of what is truly public in their world. If swarms of kids are digging holes under the fence to slip inside, they are doing so because the fence is unfairly limiting their freedom in what they feel is a place anyone should be allowed to travel. This book will show you how to open up holes under many fences, to hide your valuables where anyone could reach — but only you know *to* reach. Your concealment will make use of the private side of public objects — this is the first method of hiding things in public places.

We could be walking over buried treasure every day of our lives and never know it. Look down at your feet the next time you are walking across a grassy area and wonder to yourself, "Is there something hidden there?" One inch of dirt and grass may be all that's separating you from something wonderful buried below and you will never know about it. Never!

This brings up the second method of hiding things in public places. There are too many "grassy areas" in the world to go digging up every one of them. We live our lives, never noticing most of what is around us. More importantly for our purposes, we never even try to notice. I am sitting in a public place right now. A patio with tables and chairs, and people eating. And I know that each and every one of these tables has a recessed underside that I can not see. Hundred dollar bills could be taped to the bottoms of these tables and I'll never know about it! We don't make the effort to look under tables, because we know what we'll get if we look — gooey, chewed bubble gum.

Hiding things in places where no one would think to look, no one would care to look, and no one can look because it is "private" within the public realm. Those are the ways you hide things in public places.

But why in public?

Many books have been written about hiding. But they all focus on privately hiding things in your own home, car, or on your person. Why should we need to hide things in public places? Well, many reasons exist for hiding things, and there are just as many reasons for hiding things in public places:

- Your buddy runs up to you in the street and throws a gun into your hands. In a panic he whispers, "I did something bad," and runs off into the night. Footsteps are coming around the corner, and suddenly you realize you've been left holding the gun. What to do next?
- An informant wants to drop off some incriminating photographs with the authorities but at the same time, she fears they will betray her and arrest her for another crime. How can she deliver the pictures without coming into physical contact with the cops?
- A terrorist wants to plant a bomb in a public building, one that must remain hidden there for hours or days without being discovered.
- Your mother wants to purchase some marijuana but is afraid the buy will be a bust. How can she do the transaction without putting herself in jeopardy?
- An ordinary citizen is afraid that his home is being searched or will be searched, perhaps by a nosy landlord (e.g., my cousin has a horny landlady who looks around his apartment when he's gone). Suppose this ordinary citizen owns some valuable possession that he doesn't want to risk being found or stolen — guns, drugs, jewels, or pornography, as examples.
- After a day of shopping in the city, it's almost time to take the bus home. You're loaded down with bags and heavy boxes, and you can't see yourself carrying all this home, especially with your arms growing weak and tired. If only there was a way to take home some of it, leave the rest behind, and come back tomorrow to pick it up...

How To Hide Things In Public Places

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Whether you are afraid of being mugged; if you are being chased and need to get something out of your possession quickly but want to retain the opportunity to come back later and retrieve it; or if you need to exchange messages or packages with people you can not meet in person; if you simply must get something off your hands for a little while; or if you're simply hiding clues for a scavenger hunt or eggs for Easter. These are just some of many reasons why one would want to hide things in public. Other examples are sprinkled throughout this book. Spies commonly use public hiding places, which they call "dead drops" or "drops." Peter Wright, former assistant director of the British Security Service, MI5, described the idea like this:

> A ... method of spy communication, and one of the most common, is the dead letter drop. An agent leaves a package, for instance of exposed film, in an arranged place, and his controller collects it at a later stage, so that the two are never seen to meet. The KGB frequently gave their agents hollow containers which were specially treated so that they could tell if the container had been surreptitiously opened.

One concept you may have picked up from all this is the issue of *anonymous hiding*. An object hidden in public is anonymous, with no ties to you. Anyone with need to hide things can see the value in distancing yourself from those things. Pauline Réage, author of the pornographic novel *Story of O*, tells this story:

> ...a friend of mine used to place classified ads because she wanted, needed, men to make love with. She used to bring me the letters she received in response, because she couldn't keep them at her own house for fear someone might find them (Déforges, 61).

Déforges's friend was on the track of anonymous hiding, but didn't quite get there, since those letters could easily be traced back to their owner should they be found at Déforges's house. A strict

advocate of anonymous concealment would tell her to hide them in a total stranger's house, which is probably not feasible unless she was the landlady or had means to surreptitiously enter other people's homes.[1]

In the case of love letters, the stakes were low. If the letters were discovered, embarrassment might result but not much else. In your case you don't want to risk embarrassment, and if what you're hiding is incriminating or dangerous, it would be in your best interest to hide it truly anonymously.

The Concealment Project

Over the course of several months, numerous items were publicly hidden in streets, in parks, college campuses, stores, in landscaping, and other publicly accessible areas. This took place in some of the cities and suburbs of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. A wide variety of objects were concealed publicly, including electronics equipment, simulated drugs, cash (or play money), replica guns, assorted parcels, envelopes, and messages.

A letter as in Figure 1 was included with each hidden item. By the four week mark there were two phone calls from people who had found the objects, and one in which the package had disappeared. No more calls followed. It seemed that anything that would be found would have been found already in the first few weeks. Every week we made rounds to see if the items were still there, and after two or three months we went around retrieving the items. They were checked to see how well they stood up against the weather, and whether they were in their hiding spots at all.

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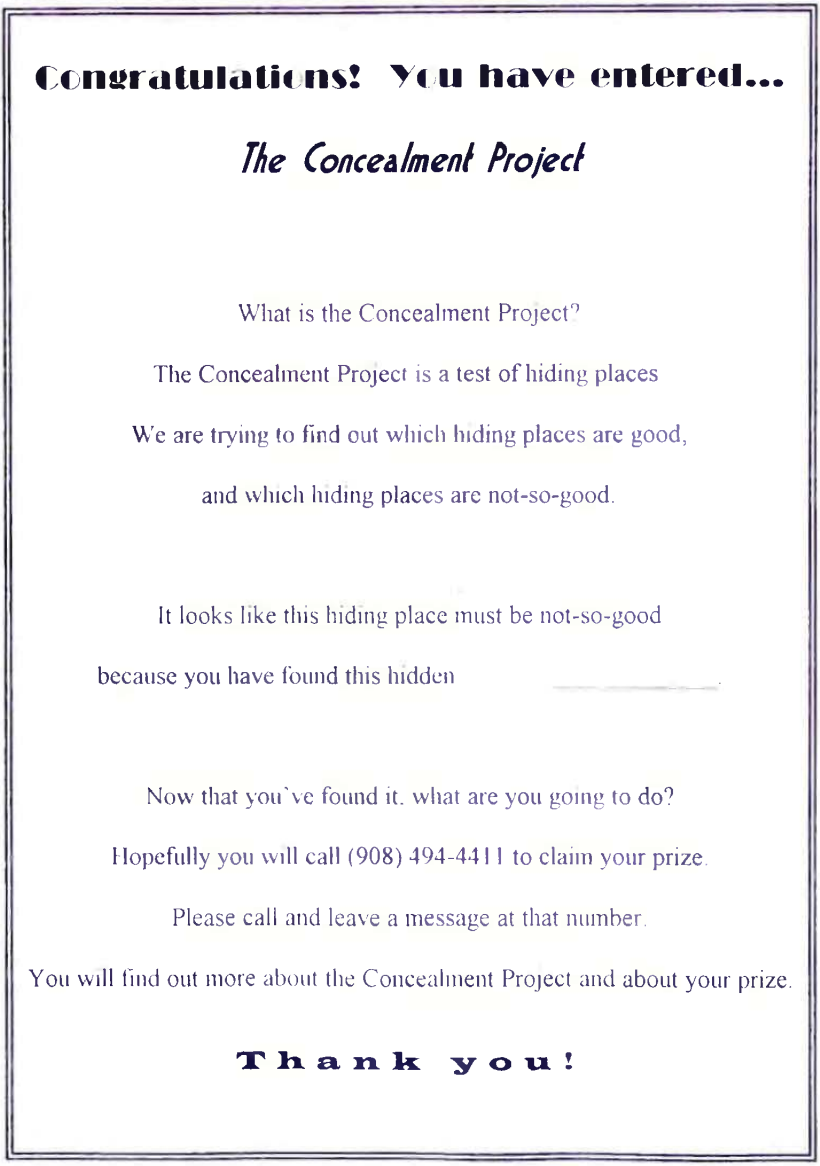
[1] Like the police. An editor at Loompanics told me a story he had heard of the Santa Cruz Police Department. They found a book in a suspect's house about how to hide things (a non-Loompanics book, by the way), which they immediately read. Using the book as their guide, the cops were able to locate the suspect's stash and bust him.



Congratulations! You have entered...

The Concealment Project

What is the Concealment Project?

The Concealment Project is a test of hiding places

We are trying to find out which hiding places are good,

and which hiding places are not-so-good.

It looks like this hiding place must be not-so-good

because you have found this hidden _____.

Now that you've found it, what are you going to do?

Hopefully you will call (908) 494-4411 to claim your prize.

Please call and leave a message at that number.

You will find out more about the Concealment Project and about your prize.

Thank you!

Figure 1

The Concealment Project letter that was put in each hidden item.

We were pleased with the result. All of the remaining items, except for one, were where we had concealed them two months previously. Furthermore, the electronics were all in working order. A lot of these hiding places are outside, and the project was undertaken during a fairly warm November-December which then turned into a drastic winter. We also had a few days of rain, and many cold nights. I'd suggest thinking very carefully about where you store electronics goods because your luck may not be as fortunate as ours (more on that later in "Battling the Elements").

The four items whose hiding didn't work out too great are demarked in the text. All in all, I believe the Concealment Project showed that objects of value can be successfully hidden in public without much risk. In addition, from seeing how those four cases went wrong we are now in a better position to hide objects successfully in the future.

Drawbacks

Certainly there are some drawbacks to the art of public hiding, as there are with any hiding place. Some of these hiding places are less secure than others. Some require prior preparation, while others are only able to handle objects of a certain size, shape or weight. Some of the hiding spots are fine for short-term hiding, but you wouldn't want to leave anything there for longer than a few hours or days. (We will see later that there are cases where even a short-term hiding spot is sufficient for various purposes.) A chart in the back of this book allows you to reference hiding spots according to locale, size, safety, longevity and impromptuness. Throughout this book there are safety tips to help make your hiding places more secure, and to make sure that you don't get caught poking around in these out-of-the-way places.

Taking Over the Public World

When I talk about "public places" I'm referring to places that anyone can enter or reach, as opposed to "private places" such as those inside your home or other people's homes.

Some public places are supposed to be private — like the storerooms in back of shops, and many of the hidey spots discussed throughout this book. But since we can usually get away with sneaking into these places they are included in the discussion.

This is like two books in one. Not only does it thoroughly cover the art of public hiding, it also covers the techniques of public anonymous transactions with other parties. Herein you will learn methods to make exchanges of goods without having to come into physical contact with the other person, thus allowing full anonymity for both.

Welcome to the private side of the public world. Get your shit together — we're gonna hide it!

Chapter Two:
Principles of Public Hiding

Coming and Going in The Parking Garage

The first rule of hiding things — anywhere, public or private — is the Law of Coming and Going. Something may be well-hidden if you're going towards it one way, but in plain view to whoever approaches from the other direction. For example, you might hide something by stuffing it under a fence or under a clump of bushes. To you it's completely hidden. But to someone approaching from the other side of the fence or bushes — is it? That's what you must always be aware of, that there are other perspectives, different than your own, which may reveal what you're so eager to hide.

For instance, here is a picture of me hiding a parcel under a staircase in a parking garage. I'm holding it in place with strips of duct tape. Looks pretty secure since it's hidden underneath the staircase. It would be easy for me to walk away from this thinking I have hidden it well.

But wait a second! Anyone walking up the steps has the parcel in full view. This obviously is not going to work. A better solution is presented in Photo 2. Now the parcel is hiding under the very bottom of the stairwell. Before, we had to worry about people coming and going. Now we've eliminated both worries.

Photo 1
Photo 2

While we're in the parking garage, let's scope out some more good hiding places.

Photo 3

Sometimes you will see metal poles where parking meters used to be. These poles are ignored by the daily commuters except when they stuff them with their garbage. That's why they're a good place to stash a little something-or-other that you have to hide.

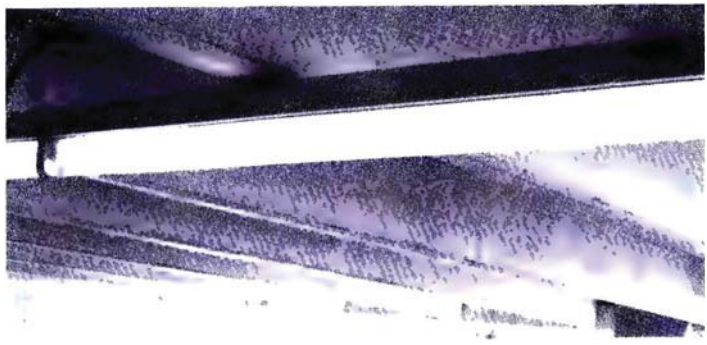


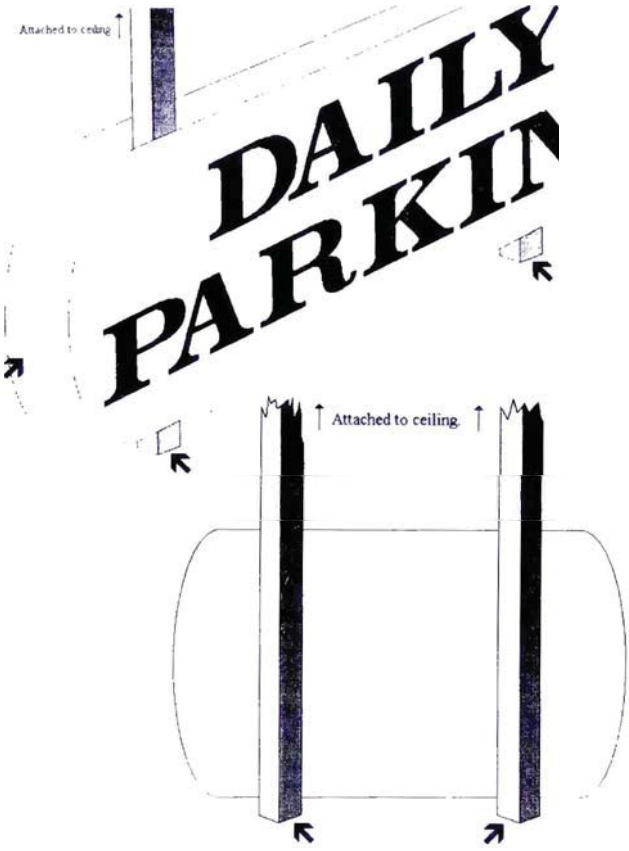
Photo 4

The "ribbed" ceiling of many parking garages is also helpful, because the fluorescent lights create a shelf on which items can be placed well above eye level. You have to be careful that the light does not illuminate what you place there.

Photo 5

This garage uses painted wooden signs. It would be easy to cut down one of these signs, take it home with you, and drill some holes in the top or sides. Then you could use the sign as a receptacle for skinny vials or small items to be inserted.

Other common signs are depicted in Figures 2 and 3. The sign is constructed of a metal sheet suspended from the ceiling by two metal tubes. Small items can be pushed up inside the tubes, which are sealed off with duct tape. Another kind of useful sign is double-sided, with sheets of metal on both sides of the suspending tubes. Here small items can be inserted between the metal sheets. For instance, a key could be slapped in there with duct tape to hold it in place. You might even hang a bag from a hook inside the sign.



Figures 2 & 3
Signs commonly found hanging from the ceiling in parking garages. Hollow spaces inside afford hiding spots.

Garages are not the most well-kept of places. In several, I found paint peeling off the wall, and usually the paint is so thick and pliant it looks and feels like sheets of rubber. If you needed to hide a paper message or photographic negatives, they could easily be concealed under a flap of peeled paint. Peeling paint and other

maintenance problems (like loose wood that can be pulled back to create a hiding spot), can also be found in public bathrooms, basements, back hallways and on abandoned or little-used sheds and other outdoor structures.

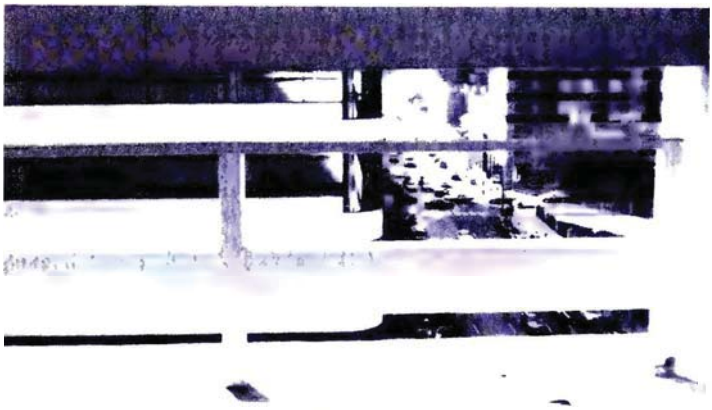


Photo 6

Normally such handrails are blocked by parked cars, thus no one goes near them...

Photo 7

That's why the hollow undersides make such good hiding spots.

You should also look at railings and handrails as potential hiding spots. A package can easily be affixed to the underside with duct tape.

Parking garages are places where people drive in, drive around, and then quickly leave. You won't find people taking a leisurely stroll through a garage, stopping to peek in all the crevices and behind every column and doorway. The garages are damp and dark and cold in the wintertime, and they are often not well-maintained. For all these reasons I've found parking garages to be some of the most secure places to hide items publicly.

However, you're not completely off the hook, because there are a few safety rules to keep in mind. Only hide stuff in a self-serve garage where there aren't any attendants walking around trying to "help" you. Make sure there aren't any security cameras or roving guards in the place, either. I've had the best luck hiding stuff in the parking garages in the basements of office buildings in cities. After 5:00 p.m. these garages mostly empty out, especially the top levels which you'll have all to yourself to do all the hiding and exploring you like.

Finally, don't overlook the very reason the parking garage exists — the car. If you have a car parked there you can put stuff inside it — and you can hide much larger items than you can hide in a removed parking meter. This may seem obvious, but there are some non-obvious ways to make use of a car in a garage.

Once, while attending a conference in a distant city, my dad got an urgent phone call from a friend of his. The friend was attending the same conference, but staying in a different hotel. He told my dad that he had accidentally left his briefcase in my father's car the night before. The two had very busy and conflicting schedules and would not be able to meet, so my father slipped the key to his rental car into a potted plant in the hotel corridor. He instructed his friend

where he could find the key, and where the car was parked in the garage. Then my dad went off to his meetings, and the friend picked up the key at his leisure, retrieved his briefcase, and finally planted the key back under the geraniums in the clay pot in the hallway.

Of course, my dad (or you or anyone) could've hidden the key anywhere — it could've been hidden on a light in the garage, elsewhere in the hotel, or outside the hotel. It could even have been hidden on the car itself. It is possible to buy a metal box that affixes to the underside of a car with a magnet. It wouldn't be too hard to make such a thing yourself. Another method of hiding a key on a car is a combination lock embedded in a gasoline cap, also easily purchased.

In my dad's case, it was a matter of friends helping each other out. But if you don't completely trust the person doing the pick-up, use a car whose trunk key is different from the door key or ignition. Then they can only open the trunk and retrieve the package from inside.

Very often, when you hide things in public places, you find that it's difficult to find a good hiding spot to hide large objects. That's why you have to consider techniques such as these. I call this sort of method a "key exchange." You hide the larger objects inside the trunk of a car or some other well-secured place, and then you merely have to transfer the smaller key or a slip of paper with a combination on it to the other person.

The Border Rule

The next "law" of public hiding is The Border Rule. We look at the world as a collection of discrete objects. Some of those objects are locations — such as stores and parking lots. The way we tell where one location ends and another begins is by noting that each location has a border or an edge to separate it. People tend to focus on the location or thing itself, and not the boundary between two things. Thus, the border is a prime place for hiding.

Parking lots are good examples of why the border rule is important to remember and consider when stashing your stuff. No one goes to the border of parking lots. They go in the opposite direction towards the store. It is a place in full view and yet ignored and not even considered by people, because it is not a part of their lives the way the lot itself, or the store, is. Sometimes you can store objects underneath the concrete at the edge of a parking lot or walkway, where the hard surface of the lot meets the grass next door.

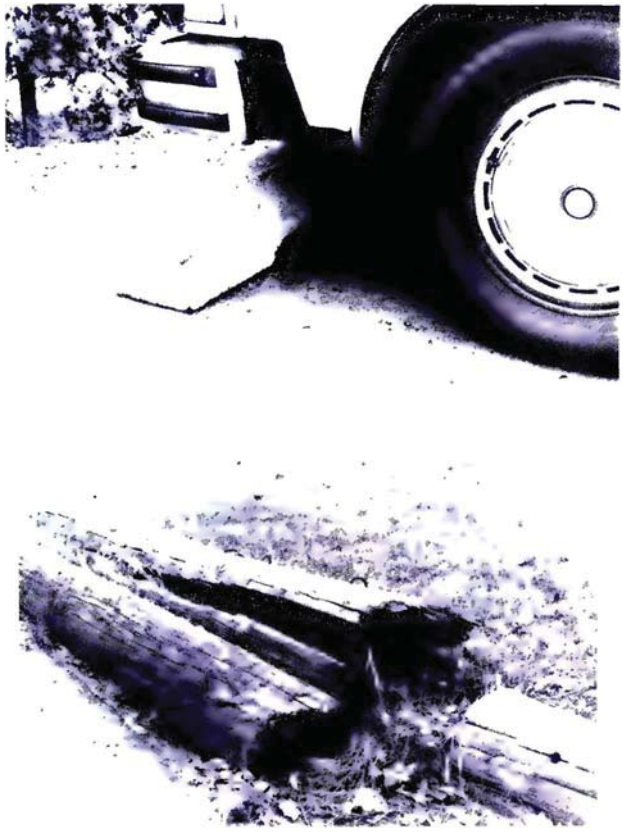


Photo 9

In any parking lot you'll see cement bumpers or bollards that have a convenient space underneath. You can't even see the small box I pushed underneath the one in Photo 8. Having a car parked there makes it even more unlikely the box will be found.

And look at these telephone poles lying peacefully on the ground, in Photo 9, defining the border of the lot. Again, they make excellent hiding spots for small things.

Fences

Photo 10
Use leaves and debris for an above-ground burial of things.

Properties, fields, homes, and parking lots are often bordered by a fence, which during the autumn months gets filled up with leaves and debris. The leaves and debris get blown in there by the wind, and may stay untouched by human hands for months at a time. From observing your neighborhood you are likely to discover several such fences, which offer hiding spots. To further ensure safety, try to choose a fence that is in an out-of-the-way place.

Sometimes you will see fences down an embankment or in a gorge by the side of a road or walkway. These kinds of fences are out of casual view, as well as being difficult to get to; hence your hidden stuff has a less likely chance of discovery.

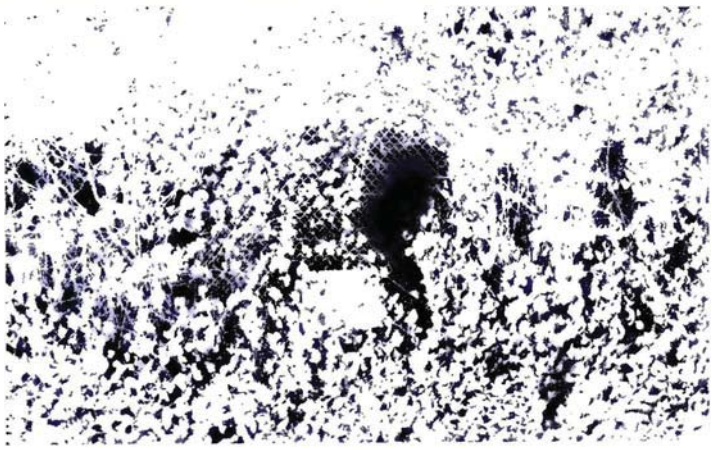


Photo 11
The ivy overgrown on this fence provides a blanket under which items can be inserted.

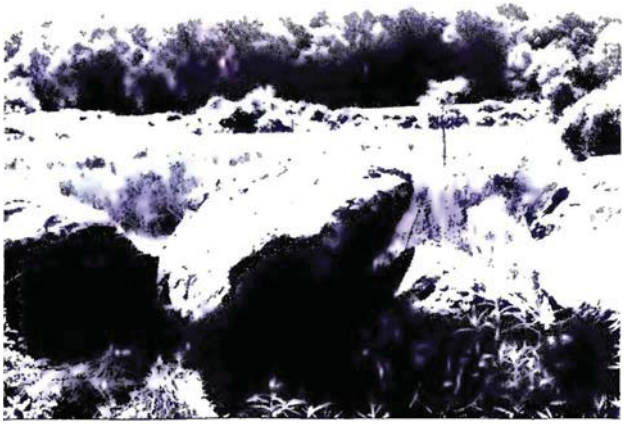


Photo 12
Rock walls are filled with crevices and fissures where you can conceal items. This particular wall borders a meadow far away from any human habitation.

Older walls made of brick or rocks can offer hiding places. Look for cracks in the mortar and loose bricks that can be pulled out. Just because a wall is new doesn't mean it doesn't have hiding-spot potential. I'm thinking of a low wall in my neighborhood which was built incorrectly so that one of its bricks soon fell out. If one had the proper tools it would be possible to slice the brick in half along its long end, and replace it in the hole with stuff hidden behind it in the remaining space.

Fences are useful if you wish to bury items, because they give you a permanent above-ground marker showing exactly where your items are buried. For instance, one FBI officer hid technical research and development pamphlets consisting of hundreds of pages of classified information. He placed the information in a plastic trash bag, then buried it beside the second post in a split-rail fence (Kessler, 230-231). The second fence post served as an easy reference point so that he or others could quickly locate the buried information.

Photo 13

The thick fence posts around this waterpark serve as safe long-term storage facilities for anything that will fit inside.

Sometimes you can hide objects inside the fence itself. In the accompanying photographs the decorative knobs on top of this fence come off, opening up a long metal cylinder in which stuff can be inserted. Be aware that it's easy to lose small items if they fall to the bottom of a fence post (unless you're hiding something long and thin like a mailing tube containing blueprints). Otherwise, you will want to "fill in" the pole. I've used empty soda cans to fill the pole almost to the very top. Just drop the cans one at a time into the pole until you're close to the top. At the top I inserted the lid of a plastic margarine tub as a shelf. Now I had a space about eight inches deep in which items could be securely placed.

Photo 14
The decorative caps can be lifted off easily to insert items.

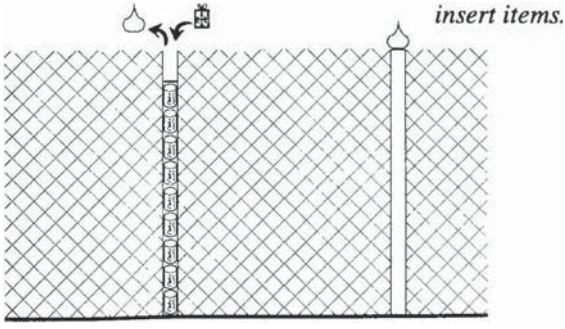


Figure 4
Stack cans or mailing tubes inside a fence post to create a high shelf on which objects can be placed.

Photo 15

Another hollow fence that is in plain view and yet provides a perfect hiding spot capability.

Photo 16

The tops of these spikes can be pried off. Before replacing the cap, a few squirts of glue can be used to provide resistance against casual tampering with the hiding spot.

Parked Vehicles

Hiding objects in and around vehicles is risky, since they may drive off to distant lands without notice. However, you can count on some vehicles to stay in one place long enough for your hiding an object there to be effective. Construction sites will leave their equipment and trucks around over the weekend and at night. A construction truck can be safely used as a drop-off site for a briefcase if the workers are gone for the evening. State holidays leave the post office abandoned from the evening before the holiday until the morning after. Think three-day weekends. You're left with a whole fleet of mail trucks at your disposal. You can also find parking lots full of school buses retired for the summer, and other vehicles sitting idle in the parking lot on their day off.

Photo 17

Mail trucks all lined up and no place to go! They provide an anonymous drop-off or pickup point for objects exchanged with another party.

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A detective reported to me that once he used an unlocked Sears repair van as an impromptu hiding spot when he needed to trail a suspect but needed to put down the heavy and conspicuous equipment he was carrying. He chose a van that was covered in graffiti and had another van parked in front of it in the parking lot. The detective reasoned that even if the blocking van were to move out of the way, Sears would not want to send out a repair van in such shoddy looking condition. Later he was able to come back and retrieve his equipment.

I visited my local Sears on a rainy Sunday and found many rows of repair vans, sitting and waiting for the next day. Predictably, some were unlocked. Two were in bad shape, covered in graffiti and banged-up. Come Monday morning, most of the trucks were gone except for those two banged-up ones. Of course I'm not specifically targeting Sears. There are plenty of stores that have repair vans, not to mention places such as U-Haul that have parking lots full of sitting ducks that you may use for a day or two for your own purposes.

Cars that belong to store workers probably will not move until the end of the work day. Depending on the make of the car, there may be decorative curved areas, or hollow spaces under the bumpers. One parking lot I used in the Concealment Project was a special parking lot for employees of a local bank. This lot was especially good for hiding things because the lot itself was hidden behind the bank, and separated from the bank by a row of pine trees. No one could look out the windows of the bank and see me snooping around there. I scoped out the parking lot for a few days until I saw which cars were there every day, and I used duct tape to attach a small wrapped box to the underside of one car. Over the next several days I came back to see how the box was doing. Each day it was still there. After nine days of this, I looked in on it to see the tape had slipped considerably. Perhaps the driver had gone over a bad bump, or had splashed through an oversized puddle. It was never the same after that. Within a few more days, the box was

gone. My advice: Only hide objects with this method for short periods of time. This would be good if you need to drop something off and have someone else pick it up later in the day. And make sure the weather is good, and no snow or water are on the roads when you try this.

Photo 18
Notice something fishy about this car? The snow should be your clue that this car isn't going anyplace, and so it is a likely target for a short-term drop-off point.

You're best off finding an unlocked car and hiding stuff in it, or in its trunk. Again I want to remind you, I'm only suggesting these techniques for very short-term hiding, such as when you're doing a quick exchange of goods with another party. For example, you might relay a message by rolling it up and sticking it in the tailpipe of a car. The person for whom the message is intended will get the impression that you are in some way connected to the vehicle. In fact, the car will belong to that store employee. One advantage of hiding packages in another person's car is that it sends the curious off on a wild-goose chase, should they choose to investigate who you are based on the license plate. It's especially fun to use a government car or a vehicle (such as the snow-covered car in the above photograph). By walking past your local police station you

can usually find rows of unmarked police cars if you really want to throw people off your trail. (You'll know they're the unmarked police cars because the station will own several of the same exact model, or similar cars, usually very no-frills cars.)

By now you should have a good idea of how public hiding works and how varied it can be. In the next chapters we will formulate some strategies of hiding, and then go on to explore in detail more hiding places in the world around us.

Chapter Three:
More Principles And Strategies

Three Transactions

There are three kinds of transactions possible when you hide things in public places:

1. You drop/You pick up later. (Cache.)
2. You drop/Another person picks up later. (One-way transaction.)
3. You drop/Another picks up, but leaves something for you. (Two-way transaction.)

The first transaction is the simplest scenario, and allows for the most versatility in selecting a hiding method. In a cache situation you hide some objects with the intention of coming back later and retrieving them yourself.

The second kind of transaction (one-way) is when you hide something, but another person comes along and gets it. Passing along a one-time code pad, a key, or photographic evidence are some examples that immediately come to mind. One-way transactions require some form of communication with the other party to tell them where the object is hidden and when they should pick it up. That communication may be done before or after the actual hiding. In some cases you won't know exactly where an object will be hidden until you go out and find a suitable spot. Then you may have a time limit before the object must be picked up

again. In these cases you will make an anonymous phone call to inform the pick-up person of the location and deadline.

A two-way transaction involves an exchange of goods. It is most complicated and may require that one person go to the hiding site twice. To return to a site is treacherous and, given certain methods, may not be possible. To overcome these problems, part of the package you drop off may include instructions to the other party about an entirely different drop-off point for their goods.

The Diagonal Rule

The Diagonal Rule will help you locate hiding places. Any time you see something on a diagonal, look at it more closely because there is probably a triangle of space behind it in which objects can be hidden. If you see a cabinet positioned kitty-cornered in the corner of a room, there is space behind it. Certain display racks are slanted back, creating the requisite diagonal.

Under, Over, Inside, Behind

Some objects may be hidden in naturally-occurring hidey-holes that are out of eye's reach due to being too high or too low, behind another object, or inside an object.

Under

If you've ever looked at a bottle of wine you might have noticed that the bottom is not flat. Rather, it has a rounded indentation called the "kick" or the "punt" at the bottom. Most bottles have this indentation, and so do other things such as garbage cans and some outdoor furniture. The punt of a large garbage can is big enough to store a tennis-ball-sized object.

Other massive "street furnishings" such as mailboxes, newspaper stands, benches and tables have undersides where a little parcel

may be attached with tape. People simply never lift up a bench to look at its underside, and, especially if the underside is close to ground-level, your cache will remain undiscovered by outsiders.

The park bench was used by billionaire Leona Helmsley for an anonymous, public, one-way transaction.[1] After being sentenced to Danbury prison for tax fraud, Helmsley found prison life less than satisfying. She contracted other women in the prison to do chores for her such as making her bed and ironing. In exchange, the women would receive from Helmsley gifts such as postage stamps, Oil of Olay, snacks, clothes, and sometimes cash. One of Helmsley's "hired hands," Sharon Jones, was assigned to do grounds maintenance for the prison camp. Jones said that on one occasion, Helmsley asked her to retrieve a package that was left for Helmsley on the prison grounds by a visitor. She "told me where to look and just told me there would be something in it for me... moneywise," Jones said. She found a plastic bag that has been placed behind a bench near the prison entrance. Jones said that the bag contained a leopard-print shirt and a bra and panties set.

Another method Helmsley used to smuggle cosmetics and other items into the prison was arranging for a relative of hers to drop items on Danbury's front lawn, which Helmsley would later scoop up and stash in her cubicle to make her stay a bit more comfortable. (All Helmsley information from Bastone, page 38.) Even billionaires need to hide things in public places!

Over

Putting things high up above eye level is similarly rewarding. Light fixtures, shelves, and architectural features often form accessible hiding spots that no one considers examining because they can't easily see them. Furthermore, because these are above casual eye level, others won't accidentally stumble upon the spot.

---

[1] Are you following all this jargon?

Here's a good "over" hiding spot tip: Is there an inch of dust and cobwebs up there? Then it's a very good hiding-spot!

Photo 19

This light is in the upper corner of a storage shed in a local park, and creates a ledge that can be used for hiding. With all the cobwebs and insects in there, no one would bother touching it.

Another approach was taken by a friend of mine when he was a youngster. He lived in the city, and would look around in the streets until he found two thrown-away tennis shoes. He would tie the laces together, stash his stuff inside, then throw the sneakers over a telephone cable near his apartment building. The sneakers would hang there with the coded message or knickknack for whatever game he and his friends were playing, whether it was cowboys and Indians, spies, or detectives. Depending on which telephone cable the sneakers were on, they could retrieve the goods by either climbing a nearby tree, leaning out a window in the apartment building, or poking it with a pole. I imagine you'll want your hiding spots to be a little more conservative than that.

Behind

Vending machines often have a narrow crawl space behind them. For many years there was a row of vending machines at a local mall that was situated in a niche the size of a closet. Those machines had almost a yard of wonderful hiding space behind them because their enclosure was so big. It was large enough for me to hide many items over the years, including shopping bags, and my bicycle on several occasions when I'd forgotten to bring the key to my bike lock.

When hiding behind a piece of "furniture," take into consideration whether the object may be moved for any reason — for example, to clean, or to provide maintenance on it. Look at the floor for tell-tale scrapes or rips in the carpet where the furnishing has been moved. If so, no go.

Inside

One of my favorite books from childhood was *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George, in which a boy named Sam runs away from home to live in the forests of the Catskill Mountains. Sam lived inside a giant tree which he hollowed out, much as the author's real brothers had done when camping out inside when they were younger. Sam carved niches in the inside walls to form pockets and drawers in which he could store food and supplies. It's a great wilderness survival book, and one that relies on a very real use of public hiding — to hide *yourself* in a public place!

Another classic example of an unlikely hiding spot is shown in Photo 20. Here are some solid classical-looking stone columns in front of my local supermarket. A closer inspection would reveal a surprise — they're not solid, they're not stone, but they are a great hiding place. These columns are hollow inside, are mostly made out of Styrofoam, and are coated in a waterproof rock-like material. I easily cut into this column with my Swiss Army Knife to create a hiding place for some of my possessions.

Photo 20
These columns look solid, but they are actually hollow!

"Inside" can be as simple as hiding things inside the Earth — that is, burying them. On a smaller scale, there are so many public ashtrays and potted plants around that you should never be lacking a nearby burial spot.

Photo 21
Planters, ash trays and the like offer a quick place to stash stuff.

Photo 22
Another example of a hollow railing. An object or message can be duct taped inside it for a short while.

"Inside" hiding spots are very common. Whenever you see a molded plastic facade, such as on the front of an ATM or MAC machine, consider that there is a hollow space inside. Any time you see a tube, such as the tubes making up a fence, a plastic marker planted into the ground, or a handrail, you've found yourself a hiding spot for small items.

Photo 23

Putting up a false front. Displays like this are often hollow or have recessed undersides that you can use. Also notice the grey vertical shafts on either side — those are hollow too.

City Mouse, Country Mouse

Former CIA officer Miles Copeland refers to four different kinds of public hiding places in *The Real Spy World*, his classic exposé of espionage. (Copeland, 135-138)

The "city drop" is most convenient and is best used for a quick transmission of goods. However, if the subject is under surveillance, it becomes very difficult to pull this off safely. In contrast, a "country drop" is inconvenient, especially if the subject has to make excuses to leave his office and head out to a rural area. But, as Copeland suggests, "Once the agent can find the time and excuse for visiting such a place, it can take a whole army of security investigators to search the entire path that an agent might take in the course of a walk or horseback ride in the country." (Copeland, 136)

The "moving drop" takes place on a vehicle such as an airplane, ship, or even a taxicab. In an airplane you can maintain your anonymity by retaining a high-cost seat while the other party is in a lower-cost seat. They can't come up to first class with you, but you can go back to a bathroom or other public area in the lower class area and make the drop-off. I can also imagine a one-way transaction in which one agent takes a cab to a pre-determined location and exits from one side while the second agent gets in the cab on the other side, picking up the object which the first agent left behind in the cab.

That takes us to the fourth method, the "brush contact." A brush contact allows for two-way transactions, such as when two agents "accidentally" exchange briefcases on a crowded subway platform, or make the exchange by anonymously sliding packages under the stalls of a public rest room.

Make These Strategies Work For You

So there you have it. It is according to these several principles that all of the public hiding spots in this book and beyond will occur. If you are ever stuck for a place to stash your cache and none of the tricks mentioned fit the bill, a little bit of applying the principles and some creativity should see you through your situation.

Chapter Four: Containers, Dead Drops And Miniatura

Protecting Against Discovery: Miniatura

Every location is dressed with a combination of permanent and temporary objects. For instance, look at the scene in Photo 24 from a park in Philadelphia. This is an actual scene I came across while walking in the park one day. The tree here is permanent, but the garbage is likely to be picked up, kicked away, squashed or melt away to nothing in the rain.

Take a look at the temporary details that become a permanent part of a place. Because those temporary artifacts, if they become part of a scene, also become great hiding places. For instance, over the past month or so, a half-eaten ice cream cone has lain in the same place in a back stairwell that I and many other people use every day. Nobody has bothered to clean up the sticky mess of hardened chocolate, not even the cleaning crew. Most people probably haven't even noticed it. If I was being chased up that stairwell by narcs I would definitely stop for a moment and shove my precious crack vial into the mess — and then proceed up the stairs. Remember, flushing drugs down the toilet only creates stoned sewer rats. Hiding things in public places allows you to come back and get them another day.

As an exercise, look at the miniatura as you go about your daily routine. See what litter changes from day to day, and what does

not. I would only consider a dropped ice-cream cone a good stash spot if I was confident that it had been there a long time and had no reason to get up and leave now. That Coke can by the fire hydrant may be a good quickie hiding spot if there are no bums in the area who collect cans. After all, no one thinks to pick up old garbage on the street — or do they? That's what doing this exercise will teach you about your particular environment.

Photo 24

Sometimes the thing being hidden is itself the miniatura, a thing that would be overlooked by others but is important to you. Consider the old mystery story staple of the million-dollar stamp being hidden by sticking it to a postcard and mailing it away to a friend overseas.

A more imaginative example of ultimately important miniatura was offered by Edward D. Hoch in his short story "The Theft From the Empty Room." Nick Velvet is one of Hoch's recurring characters, a thief-for-hire who will only steal unusual objects —

and then only if the fee is high enough. In this story, Nick is given directions to a private house, and is asked to steal what he finds in one of its rooms. His employer (Roger Surman) never has the chance to tell Nick exactly what he wants stolen from his brother's house. When Nick gets there, he finds an empty room. How in the world is he supposed to steal something when there's nothing there to steal? The key is in the miniatura — the things which other people would generally overlook:

> It had occurred to [Nick] during the drive back from New York that there might be a connection between the can of red paint in Roger Surman's trunk and the red walls of the empty room. Roger had driven the car to the country house a few days before his operation to attempt the robbery himself. If the paint on the walls had been Roger's target — the paint itself — he could have replaced stolen paint with fresh red paint from the can.
>
> Nick had stolen strange things in his time, and taking the paint from the walls of a room struck him as only a little unusual. The paint could cover any number of valuable things. He'd read once of a room that had been papered with hundred-dollar bills from a bank holdup, then carefully covered over with wallpaper. Perhaps something like that had been done here, and then a final layer of red paint applied.

Nick's thoughts were on the right track, but he wasn't thinking miniaturely enough! He puts the clues together — including the fact that Surman suspects his brother of stealing a truckload of tobacco leaves — and he goes back to the empty room and steals not the paint, but his real target. When he delivers his captured treasure to his client, Surman is stunned that Nick was able to figure out what to steal. Nick admits he was stumped at first, but "Then I remembered something else I'd seen in your car." Roger Surman nods. "The little hand vacuum cleaner. I was going to use it if I got past the alarms." Nick Velvet nods and opens the paper bag he was still carrying. "I used it last night — to steal the dust from the floor

of that empty room." The dust would hold microscopic traces of tobacco which would prove that Surman's brother had been the one who hijacked the truck of tobacco leaves.

I suppose cocaine might be "stored" and hidden that way, if you didn't mind it being cut with dust.

My impetus for writing this book came from my own need to hide miniatura. I was walking around one night, eating pudding with a silverware spoon. I was done with the pudding, and was heading into the library to do research for a book I was writing, but I didn't want to be carrying around a fucking spoon with me! I looked over at somebody's front porch saw a good hiding spot there, and thought, "Hell, no one will touch it. I'll come back and get it later." We always see odd pieces of silverware and table pieces laying on the ground, but we don't touch them — who needs 'em? When I passed by on my way home I picked up the spoon and continued on my way. This is a non-dramatic example of how sometimes we need to get an object out of our possession. People pay money in amusement parks and bus terminals to rent lockers. People put items into mini-storage because they want to get rid of them while still retaining ownership. Sometimes it's just handy to get things off your hands.

But now we're getting off the topic. The topic is miniatura. If you've never bothered to think about it before, then that only demonstrates why it is a good way to hide things. Now that you've considered it, ruminate upon what factors in the environment will make or break one of these hidden transitory caches.

If you hide an object in a hamburger carton, that carton may not last too long in an urban area. A hungry person will soon find out what's inside. The same container left in a suburban area will have a longer and safer street life. Similarly, a soda can or beer can might last forever in a rural area, while in other places it would be

picked up by a passing bum for the 5-cent deposit. Use your judgment as to what you think is a safe container. I would probably never use a beer can, and yet it has been reported that a Russian spy officer hid a $4,000 payment in a Schlitz beer can next to a tree for another spy to pick up (Kessler, 232).

Rubbish Anti-Discovery Scorecard (RADS)

Question	Explanation	Response
1. Does the container have food residue in it?	Food attracts bugs and bums.	Clean it.
2. Is the container foil-lined or otherwise waterproofed?	Rain and moisture will seep in if not waterproof.	Put article in strong plastic bag before inserting into containers
3. Is the material susceptible to erosion?	A cardboard box will melt away in the rain.	Use only reinforced cardboard, such as milk cartons and juice containers.
4. Is the container brightly colored?	Colors and shininess will attract the eye.	Tarnish it.
5. Will your object jangle or move around inside?	Noise will attract the ear.	Make sure the article is well-padded.
6. Will the container stay where it's put?	A lightweight container may move around or blow away.	You might partially bury the container, or weigh it down.
7. Does the container have a pleasant scent?	Perfume, toiletry containers, or food containers might retain a nice aroma.	Spray with window cleaner or other foul-smelling product.
8. Is the container inherently interesting? (i.e., does it have special coupons or a contest on it?)	A passerby might pick it up to rip off the coupon or see if the contest prize has been claimed.	Choose plain yet familiar containers. Familiar so that there is nothing particularly interesting about it to a passerby.
9. Is it recyclable?	Watch out for ecologists!	Use containers which can not be recycled, so no one will bother picking it up to recycle it. If it is dirty and damaged, that might be enough to discourage someone from taking the container to recycle.
10. Can it be securely closed?	The lid shouldn't come off.	Use glue, solder, or whatever it takes to make a solid, unopenable seal.

Other examples are: a lunch bag; discarded store circular (good for hiding flat stuff, but bad in the rain). A discarded milk carton might have a longer street life since milk has shorter shelf life — no one wants to drink sour milk. But you wouldn't want to use a cigarette package, because someone would certainly look to see if any cigarettes had been left inside.

You can see that there are lots of factors to consider when selecting a container for an outdoor dead-drop-type situation. Look around at the various containers that are available to you, and when you think you have found one that is suitable for hiding things in, check it against the Rubbish Anti-Discovery Scorecard to ensure its safety. Using this scorecard will help you make sure that you have not overlooked or forgotten a crucial aspect concerning the safety of your container.

Make The Most Of... Gross

The Disgust Factor is an extension of the miniatura rule. Almost no one will bother to examine a discarded shampoo bottle in the street. But nobody is going to touch it if it's covered with shit.

The epitome of the Disgust Factor is the fake dog poo available from the Johnson Smith Company catalog. The dog poo has a hollow compartment inside where you can hide keys or small objects. As the cartoonish box explains, the K-9 Key Kover was created with a "slightly aged" look. However, a "just dunnit" appearance can be made by applying "two or three coats of a clear high-gloss exterior varnish or lacquer. This will darken the K-9 Key Kover and give it a wet and *very fresh* look." The *pièce de résistance* is to give a spritz of Canned Stench Spray, also available in the catalog (and elsewhere). You might try your local mall novelty store for these items.

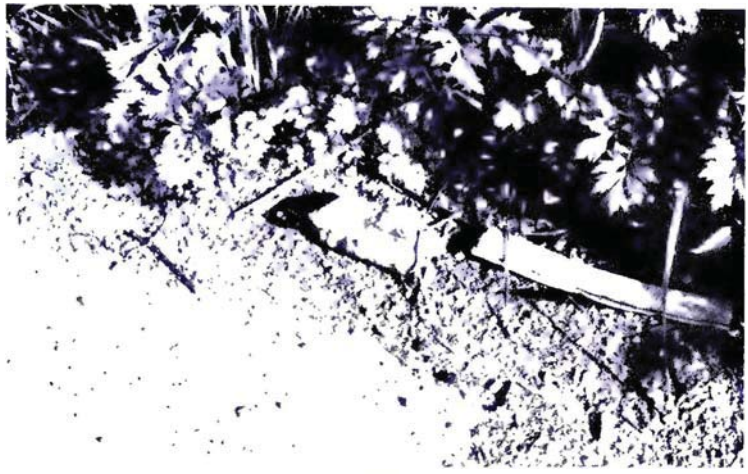


Photo 25
This fake dog poo is a clever and icky way to hide some small objects.

Photo 26
Turn the dog poo over to reveal its inside compartment.

A less stinky example might be found on a much-graffitied wall covered in chewed bubble gum and spray paint. Do you see the precious diamond ring hiding there? Not unless you venture close enough to pull one of the gum chunks off the wall. The ring is inside a plastic baggie inside a blob of soft gum.

One enterprising young man left contraband in the carcasses of road kill. That was disgusting enough for the Department of Sanitation to clean up both the dead animal and the man's loot. Sometimes extremes aren't safest, because various factors in the environment will take action to rid the public domain of disgusting things!

One Soviet spy needed to hide an anti-tank grenade launcher, and five grenades to go with it. He had to hide it in a public hiding place, where someone else would be instructed to pick it up. Due to the extreme danger of leaving weapons such as these unguarded (even in a hiding place), the spy suggested to his superior that a dead and decomposing cat should be placed near the hiding spot. As he put it, the dead and rotting carcass "would keep the place clear of hunters and tourists and amorous pairs seeking a secluded spot." His suggestion was rejected, but his superior did instruct him to use a liquid called "ZRG, type 4" which apparently has an equally disgusting aroma (Suvorov, 170). Incidentally, this same spy also hid secret documents in a narrow alley reeking of urine, for the same reason: Who else in their right mind would think to poke around in there?

Getting back to the minimally gross: You can hide something in a cup of Coke, a jelly doughnut, or a glob of spilled chicken-noodle soup. The ice cream cone that lay around in my stairwell for months is another example. Most half-eaten food items cause images of insects and disease in

the minds of hard-working folk. We know better, but we also know there are desperate homeless people around who will be tempted to sample that tempting stale doughnut or flat soda. You can poison your "food" or put soap powder on it to keep away pesky animals — or employ weed killer, or insect repellent — but that won't keep the homeless away. (Although the poison might solve the homeless problem.) Better use these tactics only in a well-heeled area.

Norman Bates understood the Disgust Factor well. After all, he hid Mother's victims in the swamp behind his motel. You may not have a swamp handy, but the sewers are a useful urban equivalent. One method I attempted in the Concealment Project was to hang a plastic planter pot from a sewer grate. The planter pot was the kind that hangs from a hook and has spider plants or other hanging plants growing in it. I spray painted the pot black and let it hang down in a sewer where it remained unnoticed. I had also created a lid for it, which was painted black to camouflage the pot from passerbys downward glances. A lid of any form is recommended to protect your cache from stray cats, and all the gunk that flows into sewers.

It's The Little Things

In this chapter we've been looking at the little things that litter the ground. The little things we see on the ground every day can be used as containers for items that need to be hidden for only a short while. Usually such containers are used in dead-drop situations, but they are useful for other kinds of hiding as well. After all, no matter what you're hiding or where you're hiding it, you always need to put it in some sort of container. Might as well put it in an inconspicious piece of

garbage. Keep this in mind the next time you see a discarded soda cup or paper bag on your daily route. You'll be surprised how often these things lie undisturbed for many weeks or months.

Chapter Five: Landscape And Hiding Around The Home

Let's get one thing straight before we begin this chapter. When I talk about hiding things around the home, I'm not talking about *your* home! That wouldn't be anonymous hiding! Surely, you can use these methods on your own property, but do so with the knowledge that the items can then be easily traced back to you.

For our purposes, when I refer to hiding objects in landscaping, I'm talking about doing so on other people's property, or in public parks and gardens, or in the landscaping around public buildings.

Photo 27
Landscaping, such as these prickly bushes, can be found around office buildings as well as private residences.

There is one form of public hiding that everyone is familiar with. The trusty doormat has been a staple of key-hiding for centuries. There are two schools of thought on hiding the key under the doormat:

1. Bad place to hide stuff, since everybody knows about it.
2. Great place to hide stuff, since it's so obvious that no one thinks to look there.

Take your pick. I vote for #1.

Luckily, we have advanced beyond doormats nowadays, as the following sections show.

Lawn Ornaments

Lawn ornaments with hidey-holes in them are available from some novelty stores and mail order catalogs. I've seen metal lawn ornaments for sale that look like frogs and turtles, and have a secret hiding spot inside them.

Incidentally, many lawn ornaments sold at gardening stores and nurseries are hollow inside and offer some good hiding spots. A big hollow donkey might be more ostentatious than you'd like, but it also provides a larger hiding spot than the little metal frog.

A similar tactic is to look for public sculptures in gardens, parks, and the landscaping near stores and office buildings. You'll find sculptures that have recessed areas, pots and vases, and other hiding spots built into them.

Sticks and Stones Will Hide Your Bones

You may have seen the fake hidey-hole rocks sold by various novelty stores and catalogs. They are plastic rocks that are hollow inside and have room for some small objects such as house keys. For safest use, mix the rock in with a landscaped bed of other rocks, preferably underneath them. This will make it harder to find.

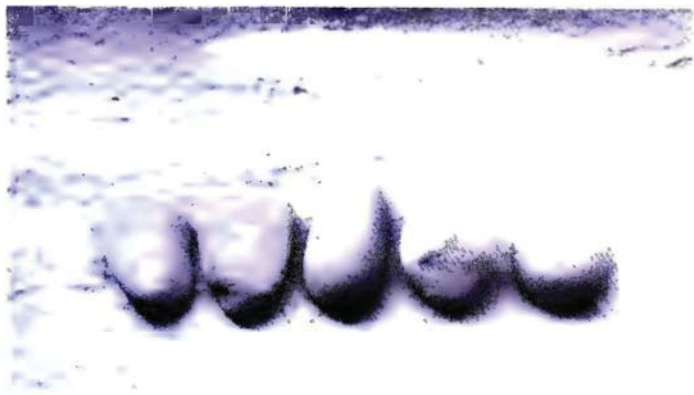


Photo 28
Leave no stone unturned! You may end up with a small fortune if you overturn the right rock. Can you spot which is the fake? (The fake rock is second from the right. The rest are rocks taken from the landscaping in front of a bank.)

Some of the lesser-quality hidey-hole rocks do not have enough "fake rock coating" on the outside, and as it starts to wear off, the artificiality of the thing becomes evident.

If you want something done properly (and securely) you can try to do it yourself. I experimented with creating my own fake hidey-hole rock. There are two steps. First, I composed a hollow rock "shell" using paper mache on a chicken-wire base. After that hardened, I covered it with a compound I bought the hardware store that is used to fill in cracks in brickwork. It hardened to a rocky appearance and texture. The rock was convincing to look at, but wasn't very sturdy, so I tried a different approach. I tried carving out a piece of wood in the general shape of a rock, but hollow inside, and coating the surface the same way. That worked much better. Another alternative, if you have the materials available to you, is to make the shell with clay that you bake hard in a kiln. When it is completed, paint the exterior to give a rocky appearance.

After you put stuff in the rock, you will want to close up the opening. You can use a lid from a plastic container. Cut the lid to a size that allows you to bend it and insert it into the rock. Then let it

unbend, covering the hole from the inside. You can then paint the lid to match the rock surface.

Hidey Log

You might have a nearby wood pile, or a forestry area where you can place a log and let it remain undisturbed and unnoticed.

Photo 29
Looks like an ordinary log, right?

The log in the photo here is actually a "hidey log" which has a secret compartment inside it. It was made using Method #2 below. There are two ways to construct a hidey-log.

Method #1

This is for barkless or thin-barked logs.

1. Take an excessively long log and cut a piece off one end. The bigger piece will be the actual hidey log.
2. Gouge a hole into the end of the log. Don't go all the way through.
3. Now construct a "cork" out of the piece you chopped off, to plug up the hole. When you replace this cork make sure the wood grains are lined up.

4. You may use some wood stain to touch up the end and make the separate pieces run into each other uniformly.

Method #2

If the log you're using has lots of thick bark, use this method.

1. Get a log.
2. Remove a strip of bark.
3. Gouge out a hole underneath where the bark was.
4. Insert your stuff.
5. Glue the bark back on.

Photo 30

The compartment inside this log could be made as big as need be. Then simply reattach the bark and put the log in an inconspicuous place.

Some Hints for Making a Hidey Log

It took me a few weeks of searching until I found a log that was the right shape and size but was not rotted and insect-filled inside. My problem was looking for fallen logs in woodsy areas. Most of the logs were just too wet and soft to make a stable hiding spot.

My big break came when I found a newly built road (actually it was a small cul-de-sac). Sand and dirt were by the side of the road,

and half-buried in that sand were lots and lots of logs. The logs were casualties of the trees that were felled to construct the road. These logs were great for my purposes, not wet or mushy nor buggy inside at all. That's because of the special consistency of the soil, and because these logs were from recently felled trees. As I was working with the logs, I still found one or two bugs, but not enough to be a problem.

Now, I don't know about you, but I don't have a lot of fancy woodworking equipment at home. Actually, I got a C+ in woodworking in high school, so even if I did have the tools I probably wouldn't know what to do with them. To gouge out the compartment in the log, I used this procedure:

1. Put on safety goggles.
2. Okay, you got me. I don't own a pair of goggles. But I did put on my glasses.
3. Use a flat screwdriver to pry off a strip of bark.

To pry off the bark, I inserted the blade of the screwdriver in between the bark and the wood core, and carefully pushed it in. When the bark was about to split, I removed the screwdriver and shifted it over a few inches. Then I inserted it at that point. I didn't want the bark to break, so I then slid in the screwdriver on the opposite end of the log, thus attacking the strip of bark from both ends. After awhile the bark gave way and came off in the strip you see in the photograph.

At this point I was faced with the task of gouging out a hole in the log without any fancy power tools. I do have a drill, though, so I searched around the basement until I found it. It took a half hour more until I found the drill bits. (When I had put down the log on the workbench earlier, I had placed it directly on top of the box of drill bits so of course I couldn't find them!)

4. Pick out the thickest, fattest drill bit. Drill a rectangle of four holes into the log where the bark has been removed.
5. Drill more holes in between the holes you've drilled.

6. Continue drilling holes until you can't fit anymore in (Figure 5). As you are drilling holes, you should be periodically emptying out the sawdust that collects inside the compartment.
7. At this point you have a few options available to you. Your main goal is to tear down the walls of wood that exist between drill holes. Most of the walls can be torn down with either a pair of pliers or wire cutters. Grasp the wood wall with the tool and twist with your wrist. You should be able to tear away large chunks of wood in this manner.
8. Some of the wood walls were too thick, so I used a jigsaw in some cases to cut the wood between two drill holes. That loosened things up enough to allow removal with the pliers.

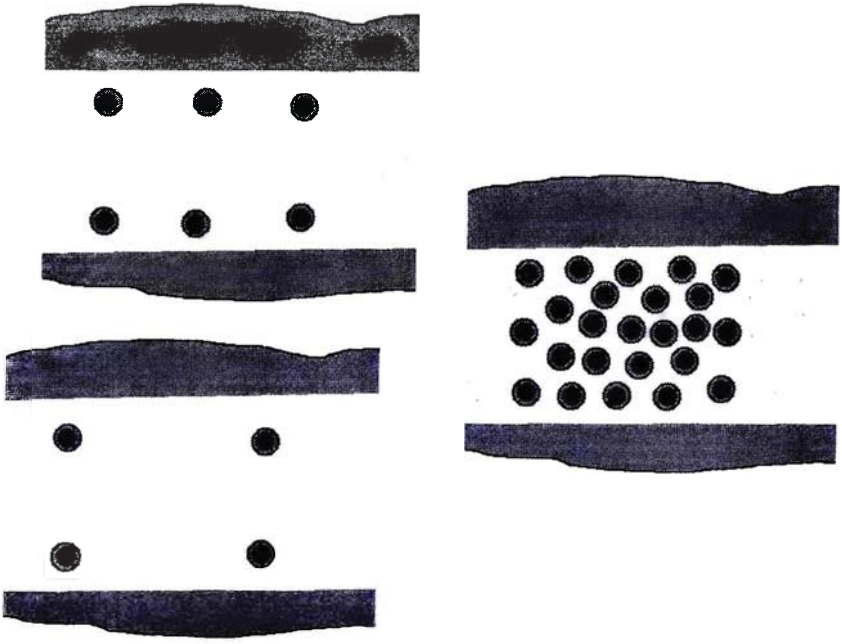


Figure 5
To drill out a compartment in the log, start by defining the boundaries, then continue to drill out holes inside those boundaries.

Of course, there are plenty of chiseling tools and woodworking tools that you might have at your disposal that will aid you in gouging out all that wood. For me, simply using the drill, a pair of wire cutters, and occasionally the jigsaw, worked quite well.

9. After clearing out the interior wood and all the collected sawdust, you may choose to deepen the hole. This can be done by starting over at Step #5. Just drill more holes inside the compartment you've already hollowed out. Again, use the pliers or wire cutters to remove the chunks of wood from between drill holes.
10. When you are satisfied with the secret compartment, you can put your stuff inside. Remember, even if your log is dry and cozy now, if you leave it outside it may get filled with bugs and water. Protect your stash in plastic before you insert it into the log.
11. You might want to cut a piece of wood to plug up the compartment. Or, you can simply glue the strip of bark onto the log. If the bark is strong enough, you could even use small carpet tacks to nail the bark firmly into place.
12. I've found that the seam around the edge of the bark strip is usually not too noticeable. If it bothers you, throw some dirt on the log to cover your tracks.
13. The finished log can be placed anywhere that it will look natural. Put it in your backyard, in an undisturbed forest, a park, or mix it in with a neighbor's landscaping.

Other Uses of the Hidey Log Technique

The same technique can be used with any carvable wood that can be found in the wild or in public places. Consider some of the possibilities:

- Bathroom doors sometimes have vents in them. Pull out one of the slats, make an incision, and you've got yourself a small receptacle for notes or slides.

- A wooden doorstop. You often see a triangular wedge of wood shoved under a door to keep it ajar. No one ever picks it up or handles it, so it makes for a prime hidey "wedge"!
- Wooden stakes, such as can be found at construction sites and holding up plants, can have a hole carved into them, and covered up with another plug of wood.

Photo 31
Construction sites are usually surrounded by a fence of this type, made with plastic sheets or netting, and wooden spikes. You can substitute your own wood spike that you've carefully prepared to have a compartment inside it following Method #1, on page 50.

(Incidentally, another way you might be able to use the wooden stakes is to bury an object underneath one of them. If you can pull a stake out of the ground, there will be a convenient hole for you to drop in a small item. There are some potential problems with this method. First of all, the stake has a pointed bottom which may injure the object you buried there. Secondly, the hole is too skinny for you to put your arm in and retrieve the item. Of course, that

could be a good thing too, because it makes it difficult for others to access your cache.)

Photo 32
Tree stakes are another example of real-world wood that can be transformed into a hiding place.

Let's continue now to look at more methods of hiding in landscaping and on other people's property.

Slates

Garden slates or slabs of rock put down to define walking paths make good lids for holes you might dig. Flat objects may be slid under with no hole at all. Target slates can be found on people's property, but also in public parks, and in corporate landscaping schemes.

Photo 33

A slate walkway has probably lain undisturbed for some time, and the slates will thus be embedded in the grass. If you lift up a slate then plop it back down, it will look out of place amongst the others. It will be obvious that it has been lifted, because people will be able to see it is laying on top of the grass. Be sure to tuck the slate back into its blanket of grass when you replace it and you'll see how much more neatly it fits in with the rest of the path.

Compost Heaps

Compost heaps are probably not good places to hide things. If it's properly attended to, the pile will be turned over every once in a while to facilitate the composting process — and your stuff will be uncovered. On the other hand, if you have a neighbor like mine whose idea of a compost heap is to dump all his grass clippings and leaves in a pile and leave it there and not do anything with it other

than stink up the entire neighborhood —in that case you've found yourself a good disgusting hiding spot.

In Landscaping

Landscaping, foliage, and shrubbery offer plenty of hiding spots. Objects can be buried under the wood chips in a flower bed, behind thorny bushes, and even in tall weeds, especially around the border of the property. Look for unkempt lawns and gardens in which to do your concealment. Of course, if you want true anonymous hiding, you must never hide things in your own landscaping on your own property.

When I was about ten years old, I was bicycling home from a friend's house and noticed that one of the houses had a lot of "good garbage." That is, they were throwing out a lot of good stuff. The thing that caught my eye was the pinball machine. It was a table-top model, pretty big, replete with lights and spinners and silvery gadgets and gizmos. I couldn't believe someone was actually throwing away a pinball machine! There was other stuff too: boxes of games and hobby equipment. And there were plastic garbage bags filled with... what? My young and eager mind instantly filled in the answer: *Playboys!* I wanted to get this stuff, but it was getting dark and I couldn't bike home with it, and I wouldn't have a chance to sort through it until the next afternoon, after school. That would be too late, for the garbage collectors would be coming the next morning.

The people who were throwing away all this good stuff had never been all that keen on maintaining their yard. The lawn was overgrown and weedy, and the bushes alongside the house were prickly messes that would scare Tarzan away. I picked up the pinball machine and carried it over to the bushes, where I carefully laid it inside the prickles. Then I went back and forth, cautiously, systematically, moving almost their entire load of refuse into the bushes. Luckily, it was autumn, and I was wearing long pants and a

jacket; otherwise my arms and legs would have been all scratched up from the sharp foliage. But I knew that this stuff had to be hidden in a place that no one else would dare to go.

The next afternoon I came back with my *big* wagon. I had two wagons then, the little red wagon and the big wooden monster. This was a job that called for the wooden monster. When I got to the house, it suddenly occurred to me that I was standing there in broad daylight. It didn't seem wise to track the wagon onto their property, especially with the tall grass underfoot, where I would be seen and possibly even recognized. My dilemma was resolved when the homeowner came outside and said, "Go ahead! You can take all of it!" I wasn't even embarrassed, at that young age, that I had been caught. Of course he had seen me the night before trekking back and forth across his property! I had made no effort to hide myself. But he was a kindly ex-hippie. He explained that he and his wife were moving across country and needed to get rid of all their extra stuff. He even helped me load the stuff onto the wagon. As he placed one garbage bag on the wagon, he pointed and said, "Good stuff in there!" I smiled. I trudged home with my pinball machine, board games, and bags. At home I ripped open the "good stuff" garbage bag to find a stack of *Garfield* comic books. Big fat hairy deal.

While the Cat's Away...

There are tell-tale signals you can look for which indicate that a lawn and landscaping are being cared for on a regular basis. If you see any of these signs, treat them as a warning to stay away from that house, because it is more likely that if you hide things there, they will be discovered:

- Those little flags that lawncare workers stick into the ground to show that fertilizer or other poisonous chemicals have been spread on the lawn.

- Small twigs and pieces of shrubbery lying around, as if the shrubs had been recently pruned.
- Grass clippings on the lawn.

Stay away from houses which exhibit such signs! In fact, you are best off looking for houses where the owners are away on vacation for a few weeks.

But how can you be so sure that the owners are away? Well, we can turn to our friendly neighborhood burglar for assistance with this. Burglars have a whole slew of clues they use to determine if a house is occupied or unoccupied, and thus whether it's safe to enter. You won't be entering other people's houses (right?), but you may want to confine your nefarious hiding activities to those houses where the occupants are occupied in Aruba or Tahiti for some weeks. These are the clues burglars look for to determine if the owners are gone:

- Leaves or snow settled on a car, especially if they have fallen onto a canvas covering the car.
- In winter when people go away, they turn down the heat real low in the house, which leaves a lot of morning frost on the outside of their windows.
- Smart burglars will go door-to-door offering free samples of magazines or something they picked up cheap at a flea market. If no one answers a door, they will leave behind a business card. If the card is still stuck in the door the next day, they know they've got a hot house.
- Also, look for a heap of uncollected newspapers on the driveway, unmowed lawn, all the curtains drawn, no cars in the garage, and other indications that the house is not being maintained.

Chapter Six:
The Street
And Other Urban Areas

The street is dark and dangerous. Click — a switchblade flicks open from somewhere up ahead, and a man steps out from the shadows. The woman clutches her purse tightly to her side. She has just cashed her paycheck. He knows she has the money. More importantly, earlier this day, she had gone to the bank and removed her grandmother's antique earrings from the vault. Those are priceless because of the sentiment attached to them. The woman looks up at the man; he glares back at her. She knows she may not escape this unharmed, and yet there may still be a way to save her money and her earrings.

She turns and strides back a few steps to the U.S. mailbox she had just passed. Quickly she pulls off her high-heel shoes and drops them into the mailbox. Now she'll be able to run. She drops in her purse too, and starts to run away.

She knows that tomorrow morning she can come back at the pick-up time to retrieve her purse and heels. Pick-up times are displayed on a sign inside the mailbox chute.

If she does not return, a phone call to the local postmaster will enable her to retrieve her items by the end of the day.

The above is a fictionalized account, but based on true events. Women have been advised to use this mailbox tactic at self-defense classes. Anonymous one-way transactions may also be handled this

way. Here are some other ways we can hide stuff publicly on the street.

Newspaper Boxes

Many flattish items can be hidden in newspaper boxes, although it'll cost you a few coins for the privilege! For example, suppose we are hiding an envelope of money in a newspaper box. Here are the two safest ways to do this:

Method #1

Take yesterday's newspaper. Now wrinkle and rip the first few of the pages, and pour dirty water on it to smear the ink. Make this damage very noticeable. Remove some of the inside sections of the paper. This will cause more damage, but it also gives you more room to insert your item. Now securely tape the envelope inside the newspaper.

Go to the newspaper box and slide this paper into the bottom of the stack. If anyone intends to buy a newspaper, they will pass over this torn, dirty, smeared one that contains yesterday's news. To further ensure safety, choose a lower-circulation newspaper, and an out-of-the-way box.

Go on a Saturday, when fewer papers get sold. If you have time to plan this beforehand, take a walk around the neighborhood and see which newsboxes stay filled until the end of the day, so if you place your paper on the bottom of the pile it will have a better chance of staying there. Finally, you can try to ensure that no one puts money in your newsbox in the first place by sliding in a copy of yesterday's paper (or a foreign or little-known newspaper) into the display window in the front of the box. That way people will tend to bypass your newspaper box.

Note that Method #1 only works until early the next morning, when yesterday's papers are emptied and new ones are put in. If

you can find a stand that dispenses weekly newspapers, that's even better.

Method #2

You can only use this method with a newsbox that has a bottom to it. Many of today's newsboxes only have a spring-mounted platform on which the newspapers rest, but don't have a bottom space. If you do find one that has a bottom, you can use this method.

Use a thin rectangle of metal to construct a false bottom to the newsbox. I've attached screw heads to the metal piece to give the illusion that the sheet is actually part of the box, and securely fastened to it. The sheet was glued to the bottom of the box with a line of superglue running across the front end of the box. The flat item is slid underneath from the rear, making it difficult for others to locate or accidentally dislodge it. To hide larger items you may be able to construct a false back to the box, rather than a fake bottom.

This method will last longer than one day, but requires on-site advance planning. You will also have to come by at night or during low-traffic times to make the delivery and pick-up, since removing the hidden package means removing every newspaper in the box.

Other Newspaper Box Tricks

Some types of newspaper boxes have a hollow section in their base which you can use for your purposes. Holding up the stack of newspapers is the spring-loaded platform. Underneath is a hollow area that is available for your use.

There is a kind of newsbox you'll see in cities which contains free papers or apartment guides or advertising flyers. These boxes are smaller than the usual kind, usually made of plastic, and are oftentimes empty and abandoned, (and ignored by passerbys) so you can use them just by putting your stuff inside.

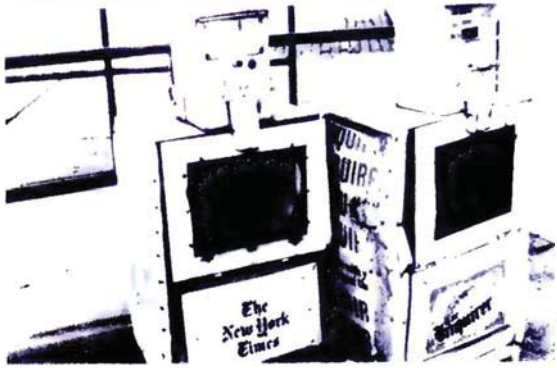


Photo 34

These newspaper boxes haven't been used for years and yet they're still chained in place. Because they are located on the unused side of a building, they are very rarely seen and can be used to file away some goods.

One shady thing to do is to bring your own lock to use on the newspaper boxes. Then no one — not even the newspaper deliverer — will be able to get inside, at least until they cut it off. The best way to use a lock is on an old, rusted-out newsbox that is not being used anymore. You can then use the box as your own personal cache, or make the key available to another person to do one-way or two-way transactions.

Bicycles

Bicycles are a clever and fun way to transfer a secret message to another person. We've all seen bicycles that have stood at the same bike rack for days or even months, with no one ever seeming to come and unlock the poor neglected thing and ride it home.

You can do the same thing. Lock up the bike at a bike rack, and hide your message somewhere in the body of the bicycle. If it is an older model, you can pull off one of the rubber handles, roll up the message, and put it inside the hollow metal handlebar. The entire frame is hollow, so any method you can use to access the inside is

an opportunity to hide a rolled-up message. For instance, you can remove the seat and hide the message inside the seat pipe.

Another method is hiding articles between the tire and the inner tube. Make sure the tire is partially flat so that your items don't get squashed in the small space. You can even hide items inside the inner tube. Pull off the tire, make a slit in the inner tube, and insert your stuff. Tape up the hole and put the tire back on.

Traffic Cones and Pylons

When road construction begins, people make jokes about how it's gonna last until the end of the next millennium. Let that be your cue: the orange cones and pylons the road crew puts up to divert traffic will be there for a long time. Objects can be safely stored inside them.

Photo 35

These pylons are chained up in a parking garage, but pylons can be found outside at construction sites, parking lots, and elsewhere — and they're hollow inside. Do you think any of the men and women who use this garage, on their way to work wearing business suits, would stop to snoop around underneath these things?

Pylons are the horizontally striped orange and white cylinders, about waist high, usually with a handle on top and often with a black rubber base at the bottom, that you see along roadsides and sometimes in parking lots or garages. While all the pylons are hollow, some brands have a plastic grid on the bottom which makes it difficult to hide things inside it. The grid can be removed with some effort, or you may be better off looking under each pylon until you find one that does not have the grid. Pylons are often weighed down with sandbags. Go by on a weekend when no one's at work and grab of few of those. You can dump out some of the sand, put in what you need to hide, and drop them back at the scene. You should also make a distinctive marking on the bag to ensure you'll be able to tell yours apart from all the others.

A few years ago, a neighbor of mine a few doors down had a sinkhole appear on the strip of grass between sidewalk and street. She called the proper township department, and they came by to have a look at it. No one was in immediate danger, so they set up an orange pylon on the hole so no one would step in it, and they told her they would be back in a month to fix it. Well, a few months passed and the orange pylon was still there.

One evening I answered the phone, and it was my neighbor calling from vacation in Florida. She had left that morning, but as soon as she stepped onto the plane she had the sneaking suspicion that she'd left the oven on. "Can you go in and check?" she asked. I said sure, but I didn't have her house key. (I do have a few other neighbors' keys. We exchange them because every once in a while one of us gets locked out.) She said, "Oh, you don't have the key?" She was dismayed, because now she was sure her house would burn down from the overheating oven. Then, in the background on the other end of the phone, I heard a small voice, her son, saying something to her. She talked to him for a few minutes and then

came back on the phone. "He says there's a key inside the orange thing in the front yard."

I went to take a look. Sure enough, stuck inside the pylon, covered over with masking tape, was a house key. Also shoved under there were a box of granola bars, a red apple, some cans of soda, and some outdoor toys such as a soccer ball and thick sidewalk chalk. After checking the oven, I called her back to tell her everything was fine. She explained that her son had been using the pylon as a "clubhouse." He told her that at first it was good to have because he was locked out occasionally upon coming home from school and finding no one home. Then he decided to solve that problem as well by hiding a key in the pylon. "But how was the oven?" she asked. "Was it turned on? I've been so worried."

"It wasn't turned on," I said. "But I know why you thought it was. There was *something* in there." I heard her slapping her head with her hand.

"Oh, *right!*" she said. "I left the *roast* in there!" Well, it wasn't a roast exactly, whatever it was. It was some sort of weird tofu/vegetable concoction that she inflicts on her family because they are all non-meat-eaters.

She said, "I was preparing it to take on vacation with us. We can't find food anywhere to meet our dietary requirements."

Why? Aren't there twigs and berries in Florida? I wondered.

"Well," she said, "you can go back there and take it for yourself. Thanks so much for helping me out!"

All I could say was, "Mmmm."

Guard Rails

Highways and byways and country roads all have them — guard rails — those long twisting snakes of metal that you only see from one side. The other side is invariably concealed by thick weedy underbrush, providing nice spots to make a drop-off of an item to be transmitted to another party.

Photo 36
A roadside guard rail.

Photo 37
The box concealed to the backside of the same guard rail.

One problem with guard rails is that they are by the side of the road, which means passerbys will see you getting out of your car

and walking around the area with a package. This can be avoided if it's a winding country road with little traffic, but even then you must be careful. Even with this problem, the Concealment Project did fine as far as guard rails go. None of the packages hidden behind guard rails became found or unattached from their position.

Snow Piles

Objects can be hidden under snow in the wintertime. The best snow is in the big piles that accumulate when snowplows come along and push the snow together alongside the street or in the centers of parking lots. The snow is usually dirty and yucky, and no one stops to play in it or touch it.

Photo 38

Root Cracks

Sometimes you can hide small items under a sidewalk, in the crack where tree roots are growing and have uplifted the cement.

Black concrete walkways, often found in parks and as bicycle paths, are especially pliable by the intrusive tree roots, and so become more distended and create somewhat larger hiding spots.

Sandwich Board Signs

Signs as depicted in Figure 6 are commonly made of wood or metal, and can be found on the sidewalk advertising stores and restaurants. You also see them on people's front lawns with the name of a carpenter, real estate agent or contractor who is employed by the home owner. I've seen these sorts of signs at fairgrounds, college campuses, parks and other extended self-contained public places as a way of giving directions to the various buildings and attractions.

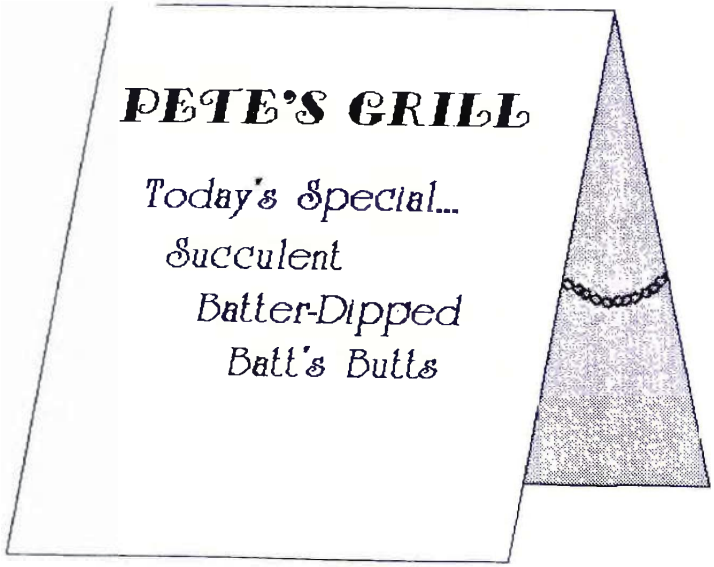


Figure 6
Two-board signs such as this can be wood or metal, temporary or permanent, and some have dispenser boxes on them.

Not all of these signs can be used for hiding things, but some can, depending on their construction. If they are made of metal you can sometimes slide a thin envelope under a supporting brace on the backside of one of the two boards. If the sign is held in place by a glass overlay, then your item can be inserted in between the sign and the board backing. By examining the available signs, you'll see what method will work best for you. Some of these signs have a box attached to them, where pamphlets or menus are dispensed. That gives you another small hiding place to use.

These methods would be best used for a short-term cache or one-way transaction where the item will be picked up very soon. The sign serves as a handy landmark that the other party can easily see and quickly pull out the contents from inside. You might be able to use this for long-term storage if the sign is a permanent fixture of the landscape (as some of these signs are). But otherwise the risk of discovery is too great.

Package Drop Boxes

Federal Express and United Parcel Service drop boxes are everywhere, and they make great storage facilities. The drop boxes can be found in cities, suburban districts, office parks, malls and elsewhere. There are three different ways to use the drop boxes to your advantage.

1. At the beginning of this chapter we saw how a woman was able to drop her purse into a mailbox to keep it safe from robbers. Package drop boxes can be used the same way. Drop in your item, then come back at the next pick-up time and claim the item as yours. Tell a good scary story (like you were being chased by street thugs) as an explanation. One-way transactions can also be accomplished in this way.
2. The drop boxes have an open, public part on top where supplies are kept. This "supply cabinet" can hold small items, which can be hidden behind the envelopes and forms. Some

black electrician's tape can be used to make a false back for one of the slots in the cabinet. Pull out the stack of envelopes or forms, drop in your item, attach a strip of tape over it to conceal it, then replace the stack of envelopes.

3. Finally, and this is the big one, if you can break into the drop box, then you can hide stuff inside. Stuff can be hidden until the next pick-up. If you time it right, you can hide stuff on a Saturday night or before a holiday when no pick-ups are made. An even better alternative is to conceal your items inside the box. Most drop boxes are littered with papers, calendars and other trash, so your item is likely to go unnoticed, hidden underneath the stuff that's already in the box.

"If you can break into the drop box, then you can hide stuff inside." These words sound imposing, but it's actually very easy to break into the UPS and Federal Express drop boxes. In fact, over the past two days alone I've broken into four UPS boxes and two Federal Express boxes. (UPS boxes are easier to get into.)

The break-in principle was discovered and hacked by Scott Skinner and Emmanuel Goldstein of *2600* Magazine. *2600* is a quarterly publication that targets people who want to beat the system and learn more about the things in the world that you're not supposed to know about. The drop boxes can be broken into easily because the locking mechanism (a Simplex lock) is not very secure. The original article about Simplex locks and drop boxes appeared in the Autumn 1991 edition of *2600*.

The Simplex lock is a combination lock that has five numbered push buttons. The user punches out a code by pressing numbers sequentially or by pressing combinations of numbers. Some combinations rely on both sequential and simultaneous button pressing. For instance, a possible code is: **2 4 1 3**. That means, first press the 2 button, then press the 4 button, next press the 1 button, and finally press the 3 button.

Another possible combination is **(2 4) (1 3)** where 2 and 4 are pressed simultaneously, and then 1 and 3 are pressed simultaneously.

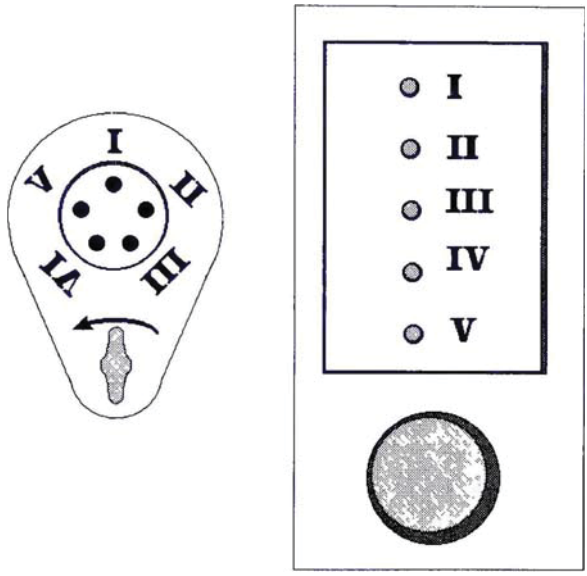


Figure 7
Two styles of Simplex locks. To the left, the skull shaped lock is the Simplex 900 Series and is commonly found on drop boxes. The Simplex 1000 Series (shown at right) has a vertical line of buttons, with a door knob or hand latch underneath them. 1000 Series locks can be found on storage sheds and office doors. The same technique is used to determine the combination on both styles.

Another combination might be **(2 4) 1 3**. Here, 2 and 4 are pressed together. Then the 1 button is pressed by itself, and finally the 3 button is pressed by itself.

With five buttons there are lots of ways you can combine buttons together. And since you can press three or four (or even five) buttons together it would seem there are an awful lot of combinations. To make matters worse, Simplex has something called "half-

step" codes. This means the lock can be configured so that to open it you press a button only half way. Thus for every possible combination there is *another* combination using the same numbers, only some of them are half-steps. Taking the above combinations as examples, you might find a combination such as **½2 ½4 ½1 ½3** Or you might find **2 ½4 1 3** or **2 ½4 ½1 3**

You can see that there are lots of ways in which buttons can be pushed to create combinations, so it would seem that the locks are pretty secure. However, that apparent air of security is absolutely *bogus*. In the article, Skinner and Goldstein talk about how they called locksmiths at random to ask them about the locks. Locksmiths estimated that thousands, millions, or "a virtually unlimited number" of combinations were possible on the locks. This is total bunk, as only 2170 combinations are available, and furthermore, little more than 130 combinations are used in actual practice.

How did we get from "millions" of combinations to a mere 130? I'll explain.

First of all, the half-step codes are almost never used. They may be a good idea on paper, but in actual fact it's very difficult to push the buttons in only half way. Imagine you're the guy whose job it is to open the Federal Express boxes in the middle of winter, wearing gloves, when it's freezing cold outside and your hands are numb and about to fall off after lugging a heavy carton up five flights of steps. Do you want to be futzing around with trying to push a button in only half way? Didn't think so. We've just eliminated half of all the combinations used on Simplex locks.

To an uninformed person it would seem that the locks do have an infinite number of combinations. For instance, if you can set the combination to **1 2 3,** you could also set it to **1 2 3 1 2 3** or even **1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3**. Just by the simple fact that numbers can be repeated makes for an unlimited number of combinations, right?

Wrong! The truth is that numbers can *never* be re-used in a Simplex lock combination. That cuts down the possible combinations immensely.

Finally, let's look at plain and simple facts. Most people do not use codes where more than two numbers are pushed simultaneously. That cuts out all the more complicated codes like **(2 4 1 3) 5**. In that code you would push 2, 4, 1, and 3 all at the same time, and then press 5. No one uses codes like that.

After eliminating the complicated codes, the half-steps, and impossible combinations, you're left with about 130 feasible combinations for this very unsecure lock. And since all Federal Express and UPS drop boxes use Simplex locks, you can break into *any* Federal Express or UPS drop box!

Photo 39
A FedEx and UPS drop box, both opened within a few minutes. (Notice the metal spike used to prop open the doors which otherwise swing shut by themselves.)

Photo 40
A closer view inside a drop box, showing some of the stuff found inside. The delivery people aren't going to notice if you hide something underneath the mess.

My Own Experiences with Hacking Simplex Locks

UPS drop boxes are easier to get into than Federal Express drop boxes. A dozen or more of the UPS drop boxes I opened used the default combination **(2 4) 3**. The other two used **(2 5) 1** and **2 (1 3)**. It looks like UPS employees don't stray very far from the default combination (although UPS drop boxes on city streets usually tended to have more difficult combinations).

UPS boxes all had UPS promotional calendars inside them (sometimes several calendars) which are used by the UPS delivery people to record the number of packages picked up from the drop box each day. Makes for interesting reading, I guess. Other things that you can find in UPS drop boxes are instructions for using the Simplex locking mechanism, silver number stickers, a metal tool used to change the lock combination, a blue plastic wedge for which I have no idea of its use, and plenty of other junk. My advice is this: If you're trying to get into a UPS drop box, start with the

default combination, then work your way through the three-digit combos. Almost always one of those will work.[1]

Federal Express boxes often use more complicated combinations, although not always. Two of the combinations I've used to get in to FedEx boxes were **(1 4) (2 5)** and **(4 5) 2**.

Besides UPS and FedEx, I've spotted Simplex locks being used in Macy's, office buildings, and restaurants. I've also seen Simplex locks on storage sheds, electric closets and other facilities that offered good hiding opportunities.

Besides UPS and FedEx, there are other kinds of drop boxes available. One company is called Airborne Express. Airborne Express drop boxes are not easy to get into at all, as they are locked with a round lock that is difficult to open even for experienced lock-pickers. You are best off using techniques #1 or #2 on them, if you must use an Airborne Express box at all. These three (UPS, FedEx, Airborne Express) seem to be the Big Three shipping companies, although each geographic region probably has a local shipping company with drop boxes just in your area. Usually you can find UPS or FedEx boxes fairly easily, and often right next to each-other. Call FedEx or UPS and ask where a drop box is located in your area — just don't tell them what you want to do with it!

[1] If you know about lock picking, then you will be familiar with the techniques used to open combination locks. In these techniques, the person pulls up on the shaft and spins the combination wheel. The person feels for resistance against the shaft, and usually adds or subtracts some number from the current wheel position, thus building up the combination. Similar resistance techniques can be used on Simplex locks but truth be told, Simplex locks are so damn easy to get into doing a brute-force attack, it's pointless to even try the more elegant approach.

Various Other Street Furnishings

Depending on where you go and where you look, you are likely to find other kinds of hiding places out in the world. For example, here's a cluster of several delivery boxes.

The best way to make use of the newspaper boxes on the right side of the photo would be to construct a false back by cutting out a piece of square plastic, dirtying it up, and affixing it to the back of the box.

Photo 41

Assorted boxes found curbside. Look around in your own neighborhood for all sorts of hiding place opportunities.

The middle boxes in this photograph appear to be locked, but in fact they are open and available to anyone who cares to use them. Naturally it wouldn't be wise to use such boxes without finding out if other people are using them too. In this case, I tested those boxes by placing a dollar bill inside each one of them. After a few weeks, they were still there, leading me to believe that these particular boxes are unused, but safe, hiding places.

In short, the best advice I can give is to try any opportunity that presents itself. Just because there's a lock on a door, doesn't mean the door is locked. Just because something's there, doesn't mean anyone's using it. By mixing curiosity with caution, you will find yourself many more public hiding spots than you'll know what to do with.

Chapter Seven: Hiding Items With Innocent Bystanders

The concealment methods in this section involve interacting with one or two other people. These people may be store clerks, information clerks, or otherwise-approachable figures. Therefore, complete anonymity may not be possible.

However, these methods offer lots of versatility in terms of the kinds of transactions that can be accomplished. Also, many of these techniques will support rather large caches of goods — often as large as a suitcase or even more. Perhaps most importantly, these methods keep your valuables safe from prying eyes, the weather, and accidental findings.

The Homeless

If you live in an urban area, you can hire a bum to guard your stuff for a little while, or even to make a delivery. I wouldn't suggest trusting them with your booze collection, but if you have some coded documents or a computer disk that they have no use for, this would be a viable solution.

Once you've found a homeless person whom you feel you can trust, use the old trick of giving them half a sawbuck, with the promise that you'll return later for your documents, and will give them the other half of the money at that time.

Don't think this idea is so ludicrous. Ticket scalpers have been doing this for years. When a rock band announces that tickets will go on sale for an event at the box office at a certain date and time, the scalpers go around planting bums at the forefront of the lines at each sale site. The homeless have to sit around on the street all day anyway, so you might as well put them to work sitting in line for you! When the doors open and the ticket sales commence, the scalpers swarm in, pay the line-sitting homeless their ten or twenty bucks, and then take their place in line. That's just one of many methods they have for getting tickets before you do!

Street Vendors

I was speaking to a Russian student, Vladimir, who was visiting the United States doing graduate work in physics, and I happened to mention this book project to him. He said that he had a problem with hiding things that he solved by using a street vendor. He was going to an interview with another physicist, a tough old geezer, and the outcome of this interview would determine the future course of his life over the next few months, whether he would have a job, etc. So this was an important meeting. The student was unfortunately bogged down with a pink tote bag decorated with cute lambs and moo-moo cows dancing all around. The bag was filled with baby bottles and diapers and rattles and talcum powder, as after the meeting Vladimir was to meet his wife for lunch when she would hand over their baby to him for the afternoon. He needed to take the bag with him, but he was noticing how the baby's rattle was getting louder and louder with every step he took as he neared to the physicist's office. This would never do! The more he walked, the more he thought; the more he thought, the more wrong it felt to be walking into the geezer's office with pink lammies and smelly, noisy baby accessories.

Finally, as he was about to turn the corner to his destination, our hero saw a newsstand. He approached it and pleaded with the

cashier, "Can you hold this for me, just for 15 minutes?" The guy shook his head. No dice. He didn't want to be responsible for it.

"So," I asked Vladimir, "What did you do?"

He smiled. "I'm learning how to be an American."

"Huh?"

"I gave him *money* to hold my bag!"

On his walk home from the interview, Vladimir contemplated other "uses" of street vendors. One idea he came up with was to approach a clothing vendor who was selling gloves and scarves and the like, and start looking apprecitatively at a piece of merchandise. Tell the vendor you are ready to buy it, but you'll have to go off and get the money. Would they mind holding onto your bag while you go off and get the money? Chances are they'll say yes, because you've established a rapport with them and you've stated your intention to buy. Keep in mind I'm talking about legitimate street vendors, here with a table or stand and a vending license. All of them have some sort of storage space under their table, so if you're looking for a place to store some items for a little while, or a way to do an anonymous one-way or two-way transaction, a local newsstand or reputable street vendor is a convenient solution.

Hiding Coins and Bills

Money is small and flat, thus opening up a world teeming with concealment possibilities. Problem: You want a hiding spot which absolutely guarantees safety, especially if it is a rare coin or bill being stashed away.

Solution: Vending machines.

Every vending machine has a sticker or metal plate showing the name and phone number of the company which placed it there. So if you need to separate yourself from a coin or bill for a little while, use it to buy yourself a can of soda or some pretzels, then call and find out when the next money collection from that machine will be.

Naturally you can't use this to hide triangular coins from Pengo Pengo, but it is an interesting concept nonetheless!

In researching this book, I called numbers from a Pepsi machine, snack machine, a pay phone, and a condom machine. In each case I patiently explained my bullshit story: "My son took some coins from my desk, and one of them was a very rare old coin with sentimental value. I believe he may have used the coin in your vending machine. Is there a way I could check when the machines are emptied...?"

Notice that if you are in the position of hiding the coins or bills from a specific person, it helps to use the coins/bills in a bathroom of the opposite sex (condom or tampon machines, depending) who is pursuing you.

Finally, you should consider the Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) as a handy way of temporarily dispensing with something flat that you need out of your possession. It is even easier to find the collection times for an ATM or MAC than for a vending machine, so retrieving your stored article will be a straightforward endeavor.

Videotape Returns

Video rental stores (and libraries that rent videotapes) always find alien tapes in their drop boxes. They find customer's home videotapes, and movies from other stores. This is a common occurrence, and the store workers do not find it odd to find inappropriate tapes in their drops.

That's where a little number like this comes into play. This is a Video Tape Safe available from the Johnson Smith Company catalog. These fake hidey tapes were meant to be used in the home to hide jewelry from burglars. But they can just as easily be applied to public hiding as well.

Fill the videotape, then slide it into the box. Label the box with your name and phone number, and "return" it in the drop box of

any video store. If you want to hide stuff anonymously, leave off the label. Then you or a friend can walk in later and say, "Hey, I think I put my tape in your drop by mistake..." Coincidentally, the tape will just happen to be there! Notice that this method is quite effective for one-way transfers of materials. Just put the recipient's name and number on the tape. The stores keep alien videotapes around for a while in hopes that someone will claim it.

Photo 42
This fake video tape sure looks real.

It should be said that the fake videotapes currently on the market are not too convincing on close inspection. The clear window in the front of the tape shows a photograph of the magnetic tape. It is obviously a photograph to anyone who looks. It may be worth it to get one of the commercially available tapes if you plan to remove the photograph and replace it with something that looks more realistic, as I will discuss below. An alternative is to affix a big sticker over the window to obscure it. The sticker can say "Please be kind — rewind!" or "Recommend this hit video to your friends!"

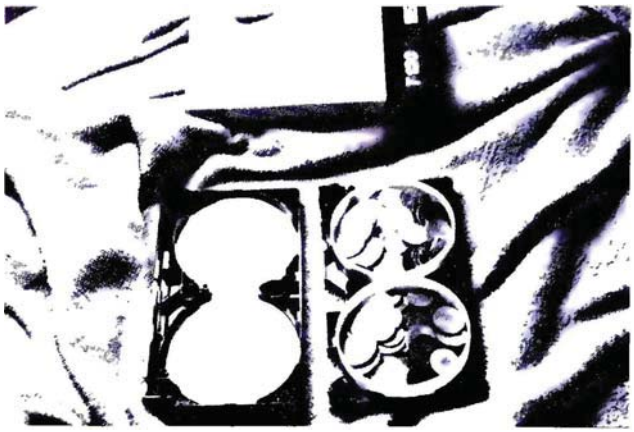


Photo 43
Inside the tape is a different story.

Another alternative is to construct your own fake hidey tape. You need a videotape cassette and a small Philips head screwdriver. The videotape can be an old, worn-out tape if you want. Some companies offer a free videotape demonstration of their products; just call their 1-800 number and you've got yourself a good source of useless cassettes that you won't mind destroying.

Take a videotape and look at it. There are usually windows in the front, which means that if you hide something inside the cassette, it has to be carefully positioned so that it won't show through the windows. Here is how you can make your own hidey tape:

1. Rewind the videotape.
2. Turn over the videotape cassette so that you are looking at the back (the side that does not not have the little windows in it).
3. Usually there are about five screws to remove. Remove the screws and put them aside. (If the videotape does not have screws holding it together, then you may be able to pry open the cassette, but you may be better off using a different videotape instead.)

4. Carefully turn the cassette over and lay it down on a desk or table with the windows facing up.
5. At the top of the cassette is a hinged flap of plastic that covers over the magnetic tape. On the righthand side of the cassette you will notice a square button. The button is towards the top right of the cassette, and usually it is recessed within a groove. Press the button, and you will be able to pull open the top cover of the cassette to expose the videotape inside.
6. You can now carefully pull apart the two halves of the cassette. They will separate easily, although usually some tiny metal springs or tubes will pop out. Try to keep the tubes in place and replace them as best as you can if they do come off. Springs and little metal bits can be thrown out. You will now be looking at two reels containing the videotape.

Videotape manufacturers use two different kinds of reels. Short videotapes (such as free promotional ones) use a reel that looks like a pill dispenser, in which the spool is subdivided into triangle sections. If you are using such a tape, and have something small to hide, simply place the items into the spool sections that won't be visible through the window in the cassette. You can also use wire cutters or a sharp blade to cut the dividers between sections, to make a larger space. After doing this, replace the cover on the cassette and make sure the hidden items are not visible through the window. Then replace the screws.

Another kind of videotape reel does not afford the luxury of having individual hidden compartments in which to hide stuff. On long-playing tapes, one reel will be completely filled with magnetic tape, leaving you with no place to put your own items. In these cases you will need two tapes. Follow the above directions for one of the cassettes then take the following steps:

7. Cut the tape with a scissor.
8. Make sure the tape is wrapped tightly around the reel, then use a rubber band to ensure it stays put.

9. This kind of reel has plastic circles protecting the tape, but the circles get in your way. The first step is to remove one of the circles off the reel. You may be able to simply rip it off, or use wire cutters or other tool to cut through the plastic.
10. Smear glue all over the edge of the tape. I spread super glue with an old paint brush onto the tape. The glue will bind together all the individual coils of tape. Some cheap paperback books use a glue binding of this type. Try to spread the glue evenly and thinly so that there are no obvious lumps.
11. This is the tough part. You want to make two incisions, through the top and bottom of the roll of tape. You will end up with two tape half-circles, bound together with the glue. The incisions must be quick and sharp. Use an electric saw for the purpose and *make sure you don't slice off your fingers!*
12. Now you can discard one tape semi-circle (or use it for another hidey-tape). As for the other semi-circle, crack open another videotape cassette, remove the unusued reel, and fit the semi-circle onto it.
13. Carefully screw the top and bottom of the cassette shell back together again, and you've got a fake hidey tape that looks like the real thing.

Final Notes on Using Videotapes

One thing you should be aware of is that your fake videotape has to both look and feel authentic. Video store workers are used to handling hundreds of videotapes every day, so they can instinctively tell when the weight is wrong. Also, make sure there is nothing inside your cassette which will jangle or make noise. Anything odd about your videotape is cause for closer inspection. To further guard your "video" against discovery, apply a sticker to the long backside of the cassette, effectively taping it shut. You can also procure the silver stickers which video stores use to detect whether a video has been tampered with. Silver stickers are applied to the sides of a cassette and have a warning message on them along the

lines of "It is a violation of copyright laws to copy this video cassette." (To make illegal copies of videotapes, people will take apart the cassette to get to the tape inside.) If the evil tape-copier tries to pull off a silver sticker, it leaves behind a residue which spells out "Illegal Copy" or "Void." Silver stickers are good to apply to your fake videotape because video-store employees are conditioned to not remove silver stickers because they know about the hidden message that is left behind when the sticker is removed. There are mail-order catalogs that cater to video stores which offer security stickers, empty videotape shells, and other goodies that will help you if you choose this endeavor. See the "Vendors" section at the back of this book for the address and phone number of one such catalog.

Coat-Check Rooms

One way to hide things in public buildings is to use the coat-check room. Hide the stuff in a pocket of your coat, and hang up the coat in the coat-check room at a museum, restaurant, office, or wherever. Coat rooms can also be used to store bags or packages.

There are many variations on the coat-check room. Some coat check rooms have an attendant who gives you a number in exchange for your coat and bag. Others are self-serving, such as the coat room in a small museum near my home. That coat-check room is more like a large closet where you can go in and hang up your coat or put down a package on a shelf while you tour the museum. That particular coat-check room has no attendant, which allows me to more easily use it for one- and two-way transactions.

Other coat-check locations are not rooms at all. A store may provide cubbyholes or lockers for customers to put their bags as they are coming in, to lessen the temptation of shoplifting.

Hair salons will often have a rack of hangers or pegs on which patrons can hang their coat and hat. A surprising amount of material can be hidden in the deep pockets of a heavy winter coat.

Ignore the signs saying "Not responsible for lost or stolen items." No one's going to steal a coat that's hanging there, especially since you will be smart enough to use a smelly, ratty old coat for the purpose, and especially if you hang your coat in the beauty parlor full of little old women out for a cut & blow. Restaurants and bars also will often have a place to hang a coat, but they are more prone to thievery. A good place to check your coat is the hanger or rack in a church or synagogue. This is especially good if you are not actually a member of that congregation. And because there are daily or weekly services, and people coming and going constantly, no one will notice if you leave something there for a long period of time.

Big-city coat-check rooms exchange your belongings for a number. Such a setup is not conductive to anonymous transactions with other people. However, if you do have larger packages to exchange, you can contact the other party beforehand and make arrangements for a key exchange as discussed earlier. What you do is check your large package in the coat-check room, and get the number from the attendant. Now you can hide your number using one of the techniques in this book. Certainly, tiny numbers are easier to hide than bulky packages. Then you contact the other person anonymously, telling them where the number is hidden. They retreive the number, and exchange it at the coat-check room for your package. Mission accomplished! Two-way transactions can also be done in this manner.

My uncle, who is a high-stakes gambler in Atlantic City, doesn't bother with coat-check rooms at all. If he is in a casino and needs to put down his coat or bags, he simply asks for a room in the hotel. They gladly oblige. Few people have the clout to ask for and receive a free hotel room, but for the hiding of big objects for long periods of time, renting a cheap motel room may be the best and safest solution. Like the coat-check room number, motel keys can be easily hidden to allow for anonymous interchanges of packages.

Information Desks

This is an extension of the coat-check room idea. It is a way of having an innocent third party hold onto your objects and perhaps even unknowingly pass them on to someone other than yourself.

Hide your items in a shopping bag, gym bag, or maybe even a briefcase or small piece of carry-on luggage. Then ask someone behind a counter — any kind of counter will do — if they would mind holding onto your bag for a little while. Aid stations and information desks are good for this, even though they often display signs that say the clerk will not hold onto items for you. Smile and be charming.

If you need overnight storage you could even make the drop-off close to closing time, and produce an excuse such as, "I have three other bags outside — I can't carry them all on the bus with me. Do you mind if I come first thing tomorrow morning to pick it up?"

I've had mixed results with these tactics. One hospital receptionist allowed me to store two overstuffed shopping bags plus an Army knapsack overnight. Other clerks wouldn't let me store a tiny gym bag for even half an hour. It depends on store policy and employee bitchiness.

A few times when I dropped off a gym bag or a knapsack I had pre-loaded the bag with a booby trap so that I could tell if these clerks and receptionists were peeking in my bags. The usual trap was a strand of hair attached to the underside of the zipper and the inside of the bag. If the bag were unzipped more than an inch, the hair would either become unattached or break. To check the trap, I would open the bag very slowly and carefully, just a half inch or so, and see if the hair had become unglued.

A similar trap was constructed for the knapsack buckle. Surprisingly, my traps were never set off. I guess the people who are nice enough to accept a bag are honest enough to not look inside.

If you want to use an information desk for a one-way transaction, go to the desk at least six or eight hours before closing (or

early in the morning) and ask: If you leave your bag there will that same person still be there five hours later? You pretend that you want that same person there, meanwhile covertly finding out when his shift ends. The pick-up person doesn't stop by until after that clerk has left for the day. That way the clerk doesn't know that the "wrong" person is picking up the dropped bag. An alternate solution is to tell the clerk that you might have your "friend" (or "wife" or "son") pick up the bag for you later.

Lost and Founds

This idea is both logical and unassuming. Simply drop off the item to hide at a Lost and Found. Later, you come back to claim your lost item. When you come back around to pick up your stuff, make sure the staff has changed shifts! Where can you find Lost and Founds? Shopping malls, museums, parks, airports, schools — virtually anyplace.

You can see how this ruse works perfectly for one-way transactions with another person. One person reports the item as found — then the other shows up and says that he has lost that very same item.

It may be a bit strained to work a two-way transaction where items are interchanged. To work this, both parties must work it out so that they each appear at the Lost and Found desk during separate shifts to drop their items, and then shifts opposite those to pick up the other party's item.

I would like to think that most Lost and Founds are legitimately helpful, but you can never be too sure. You might want to first test out a facility by having a friend turn in a "found" item like a wristwatch or pair of sunglasses, and then later see if you can claim the item at the Lost and Found. Over the past few months I've tested the honesty of Lost and Founds at the various shopping malls, colleges, and amusement parks that I happened to be visiting. The experiment was conducted as follows: A friend or family mem-

ber I was with would drop off a watch at a Lost and Found. This was a nice-looking and new watch that I had received as a gift but I didn't particularly care if it were lost. An hour later I would approach the Lost and Found and try to claim my watch. In every instance, the watch was returned to me. However, just because my experiment was successful, that doesn't mean we will all be so lucky. Consider what one Disney World employee had to say about the Lost and Found at "the happiest place on Earth":

> If you find something you like, you keep it. What are you, nuts? You keep that stuff. Your first week here, you put it in Lost and Found and then you realize that the [supervisors] are going through it going, "Hey! Raybans!" (Project, 129)

This quote, taken from *Inside The Mouse*, a collection of sociological essays and exposés on Disney World, is one of several which reveal that employees may not be all that scrupulous. Another Disney employee reported that if you find something you might as well keep it, "because the people at the Lost and Found are going to take it anyway." This is truly alarming talk, especially about Disney World of all places, and hopefully the problems there will be resolved. In the meanwhile, make sure you test out your facility before using it for important hiding or transactions. Also importantly, anything that you hide in a Lost and Found should be concealed in a manner so that it does not look valuable. For instance, if you were hiding a check or written message, you might secrete it inside the binding of a math textbook, or inside the lining of a cheap eyeglass case.

Hotel Front Desks

If you want to do a one-way transaction, the clerks running the front desk at hotels are willing to hold onto an envelope or small package to be given to a hotel guest. Seal the envelope securely and

put a first and last name on it. Later the recipient can come and pick it up. His story may be that he is a guest at the hotel, or even better, merely a visitor to the area who is attending a conference in the hotel meeting rooms.

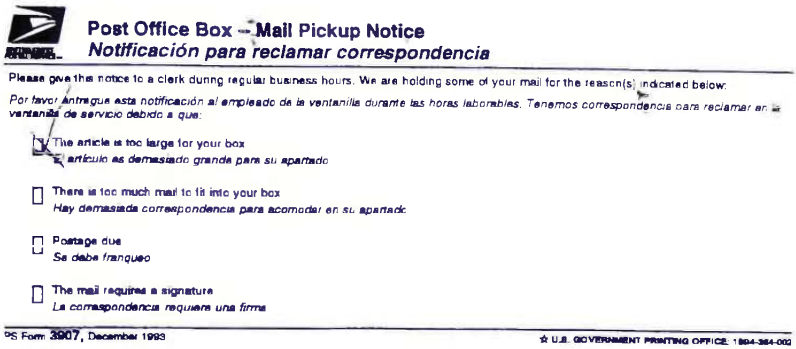
The Post Office and Mail

Let's examine a few ways that post office can be used to hide things. Renting a post-office box is one way to give yourself a "home away from home." You can put it to use it as if it were a safe deposit box, using it as a storage space for items — just make sure you wrap them up to look like a package before putting them in. I've done this when in quick need of a hiding spot outside my home. (When I talk about post-office boxes here, I'm also refering to boxes rented by private companies such as Mail Boxes Etc.)

To hide an object that's larger than your post-office box, simply mail it to yourself at your postal address. Some people carry around envelopes and postage with them, in their briefcase or bag, so they can mail stuff back to themselves whenever they need to.

What happens if you mail a package to your P.O. box but it's too big to fit in? There are a few different methods the post office uses when a package arrives that is larger than the P.O. box. Some post offices have a set of storage lockers built into the wall. They put a key in your P.O. box and instructions to use the key in the storage locker, where you'll find your package. But sometimes they hold it in the mailroom and put a form in your box telling you to pick up the package at the counter (Form 3907 as shown in Figures 8 and 9). The point is by using this method you can't guarantee complete anonymity in that you may have to interact with the postal clerk behind the counter.

Another good thing about having a post-office box or rented box is you can give the key to someone else. But you'd have to really trust the person to allow that.



Post Office Box – Mail Pickup Notice
Notificación para reclamar correspondencia

Please give this notice to a clerk during regular business hours. We are holding some of your mail for the reason(s) indicated below:
Por favor entregue esta notificación al empleado de la ventanilla durante las horas laborables. Tenemos correspondencia para reclamar en la ventanilla de servicio debido a que:

☒ The article is too large for your box
El artículo es demasiado grande para su apartado

☐ There is too much mail to fit into your box
Hay demasiada correspondencia para acomodar en su apartado

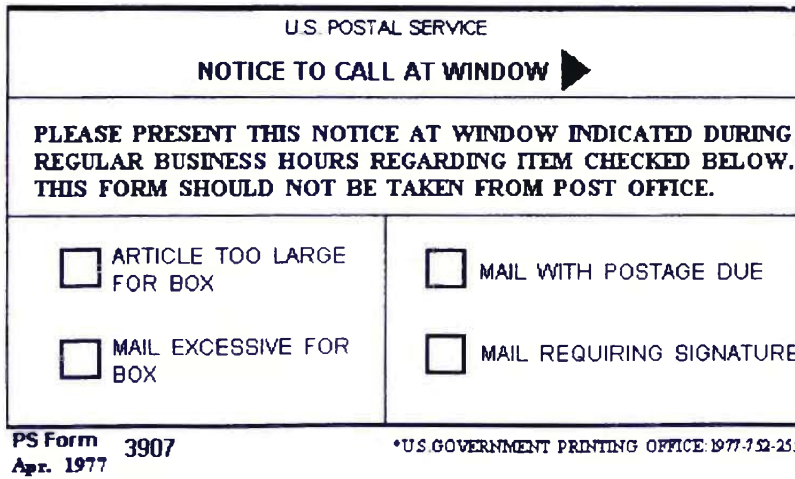
☐ Postage due
Se debe franqueo

☐ The mail requires a signature
La correspondencia requiere una firma

PS Form 3907, December 1993 ☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1994-364-002

Figures 8 and 9

Two versions of Form 3907. Figure 8 (above) shows the newer form copyright 1993. The older form in Figure 9 (below) is also still in circulation. Both are basically the same and can be used by you the same way.



U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

NOTICE TO CALL AT WINDOW ▶

PLEASE PRESENT THIS NOTICE AT WINDOW INDICATED DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS REGARDING ITEM CHECKED BELOW. THIS FORM SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN FROM POST OFFICE.

☐ ARTICLE TOO LARGE FOR BOX

☐ MAIL EXCESSIVE FOR BOX

☐ MAIL WITH POSTAGE DUE

☐ MAIL REQUIRING SIGNATURE

PS Form 3907
Apr. 1977

*U.S.GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1977-752-255

If you don't trust the person, there is another method to use. First, mail yourself the object in a large box, too large to fit into your P.O. box. The postal worker will place either a cardboard form or a locker key in your box. You can now give that form or key to the other party, and they can go to the post office and redeem

the package without having any access to your rented box. Notice that it is easier to hide a small item like a key or a flat form than it is to hide a larger package. You can easily hide the form behind a sign or bulletin board, along with a message to hand in this form at the post office in exchange for the package. It's a way of hiding something small but getting something big in return.

There are some final facts you should know about trading in the form at the post office. First of all, by using this method the other person is going to find out which post office box is yours, because it's written on the address on the package. If you give the other party the form to hand in, the person has to know which P.O. box is yours in order to claim the package. At my post office, when I hand in a form, the clerk asks me which box is mine, and she uses that to locate my package in the back room. Other post offices write the box number on the form itself. So if you want to keep your box number anonymous, this is not the way to do it.

Another factor to consider is that if you live in a small town where everyone knows each other, this method clearly won't work, because the postal clerk will want to know why this other person is picking up your package instead of you. I know this from experience. My own town is pretty big and no one knows each other. But there is a neighboring town full of friendly old people (a little *too* friendly, if you ask me,) who start chatting to you in the supermarket, post office, or wherever you go. Your best bet is to use this method in a larger town.

There is another way to get around the problem of interaction with the postal clerk, and that is if your post office has the storage lockers I mentioned earlier. After mailing the package to your box, the post office will either leave a form or a locker key in your box. If they give you the key, you're fine. But what if they give you the form? Here's what I do.

First, look in your box and see if you have a form or key. If you have the form, leave it in there and go home. During the next business day, call up the post office and say, "Hi, I checked out my

P.O. box on Saturday, after the teller window was closed, and it says I have to pick up a package at the window. Problem is, I can never get to the post office when the window is open because I'm at work. Can you put my package in one of those lockers, and put the key in my box?"

The postal clerk will make the exchange. The next time you go to the post office, pick up the key but leave the package in the locker. Now you can anonymously transmit the key to the other party, and they can pick up the package without having to make contact with the postal clerks.

Some Products for the Paranoid

Hiding things anywhere, especially in public places, entails the risk of discovery. Luckily, there are manufacturers in the world who cater directly to the ultra-cautious and ultra-paranoid amongst us.

There is a mail order catalog called Magellan's which caters to jet-setters and international travelers. Magellan's sells an assortment of tamper-resistant locks and seals with which one can lock up a suitcase, briefcase, bag or parcel. The PrivaSeal is a sturdy plastic seal that can be snapped onto zippered bags to keep them shut. The PrivaSeal is individually numbered, to look like some high-level security organization has taken care of security arrangements on your bags. The Flite-Tight is a similar product that comes with an unrippable ribbon which is wrapped around the parcel to protect it. The PrivaSeal and Flite-Tight are both good deterrents to the casual sneak-peek. Especially if you are leaving bags in coat-check rooms, behind information desks, and elsewhere as described above, using one of these products will give you an extra sense of probability that your possessions are safe.

I picked up the Portable Lock'R at a discount office-supply store near my house (you can call 800-828-1438, although it's probably cheaper if you can find it in a store). The Portable Lock'R is a

strongbox that locks shut with a cable lock which can be wrapped around a bike rack, signpost or pole. I've used mine at the tennis courts, but you can use it for hiding things in public places. For example, remember Photo 10 which showed leaves blown inside a fence? If you wanted to make that hiding spot a little safer, you could attach the locker to the fence, and then conceal it under the leaves. After all, if something is important enough to hide, it's important enough to lock up so that you're sure that even if someone does find your cache, they can't make off with it.

Photo 44

The Portable Lock'R can be used on its own (as shown here). But a better use would be to hide something in it, and then hide the locker also.

This reminds me of a story I was told by a co-worker. His brother was always forgetting the house key when they were growing up. After a few lock-outs, the brother finally made a copy of the key and tied it to their pet German shepherd's collar. They

kept the German shepherd out in the backyard while they were at school. If the brother came home and found himself locked out, he could simply go to the backyard and get the key from the dog's collar. Of course, the dog was friendly to only close family members. Anyone else he would not hesitate to chew to death, so the key was pretty safe when "hidden" there.

Chapter Eight:
Public Buildings And Businesses

Much of the public world is actually made up of privately-owned establishments such as hotels, businesses, offices, hospitals, amusement parks, schools and stores. The owners of these places assume that the people who visit them are actually there to purchase their goods or services, or to work in their office, to learn in their school, or sleep in their hotel, etc. However, no formal "legitimacy check" is done, so you are generally allowed to wander around in these public-private buildings and do whatever the hell you want! Which includes, of course, using these buildings to hide stuff. That's what this chapter is about: Hiding stuff in public buildings.

Corridors

Before we discuss the places we can go to hide things, the buildings themselves, let's talk about the in-between places. You'll recall that the in-between places offer an additional level of security because people don't think of in-betweens as a "place." Corridors have the added benefit of being so open and accessible that people would never think you are crazy enough to hide something there. And yet there are very good reasons for using a corridor. As an example, consider the forgetful young man who needed a place to keep a spare key to his apartment. He was constantly locking him-

self out, until finally he planted a spare key in the gravel of a potted plastic plant that was in his apartment hallway.

While we're on the subject, another solution to this problem is to go to your local hardware store or locksmith and pick up a brass lock-box like the type used by real estate agents. The lock-box is a sturdy metal box with a combination lock on it. The combination lock serves two purposes: it keeps the box locked, and it also keeps the box unremovably attached to the doorknob of a house which the real estate agent is showing. When the real-estate agent is showing houses to clients, instead of having to carry 100 keys, he or she must simply remember one combination. When the agent comes to each house, he or she can work the combination lock, open the box, and take out the house key hidden inside. I did an unscientific survey of hardware stores and locksmiths in my area. Most locksmiths sold the metal lock-box made by Supra Corporation for around $35 to $40.

Utility Boxes

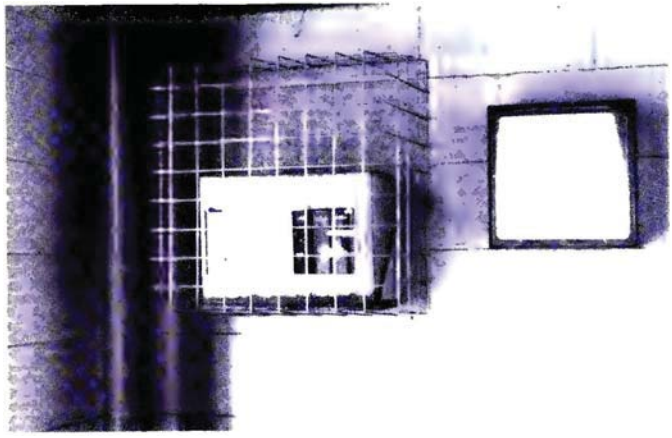
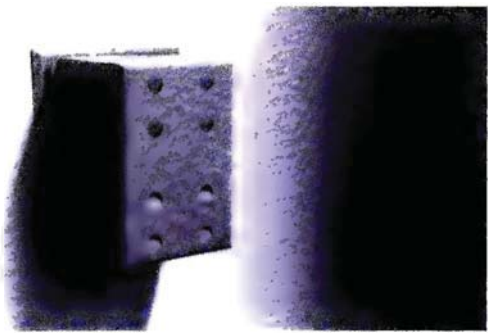


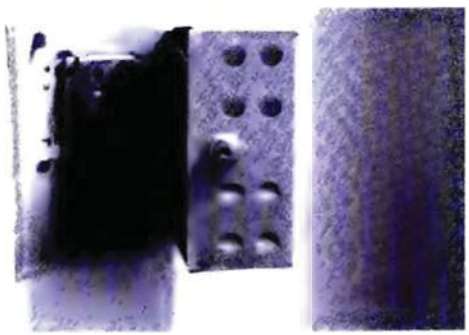
Photo 45

A utility box attached to a wall. Why is it there? What does it do? Who the hell knows? But if you find your own out-of-the-way wall or corridor, you can make your own and hang it up and no one will bother it.

A more inventive hiding spot is in a false utility box which you can construct yourself. You will notice, as you walk through corridors and stairwells, that you will very often find utility boxes hanging on the walls. The boxes are metal or plastic, and inside are things such as light switches, thermostats, knobs, and unfathomable mechanisms relating to the circulation systems of the place. Sometimes the boxes have pipes or dials sticking out of them. Sometimes the boxes are at eye level; other times they are close to the ceiling. Often they are locked, or have the capability to be locked.



Photos 46 and 47
It's an open and shut case to use a utility box as a quickie impromtu hiding spot.



There are two ways to use utility boxes. If you can get inside the box, you can hide stuff inside it. Or, even better, you can make your own. I find that these ersatz boxes are great to hang up, because they offer a method of hiding that is both unique and as safe as the lock you can place on them.

Boxes can be purchased at a hardware store. You'll want to weather yours to make it appear ancient and neglected. The older boxes were metal. That was good for hiding stuff in. New boxes are transparent plastic. I suppose they make them transparent so that it is easy to read the thermostat gauges. That's fine if you're using the box for legitimate purposes — but that's not what we're doing with them. So take some paint (try to match the wall color as closely as you can) and paint the thing so that no one can see inside.

A nifty extra touch is to make a container within the container. For instance, construct an unusual, important-looking device that you can hang on the wall and put inside your utility box. You would hide your cache inside the device, inside the locked box. That's double protection for double peace of mind.

The fake utility box is a prime example of hiding objects in plain view. It is so obvious, so in-your-face, that it's the least-expected place of all to look.

Other Hiding Spots in Corridors

The new no-smoking policies of many public buildings have led to the all the ash trays being ignored. You've seen those metal boxes and bowls attached to the walls of places such as libraries and offices where no smoking is permitted. Inside the ash trays is a smaller box or bowl which is supposed to be used to collect ashes. For a quick hide you can plop something directly into the ashtray, or conceal it underneath the box or bowl. It will be covered by the double-door mechanism on top. Only use this if you're in a pinch and expect to come back for the item very shortly.

Photo 48
A wall-mounted ash tray. This one is on an outside wall, but they are commonly found inside as well.

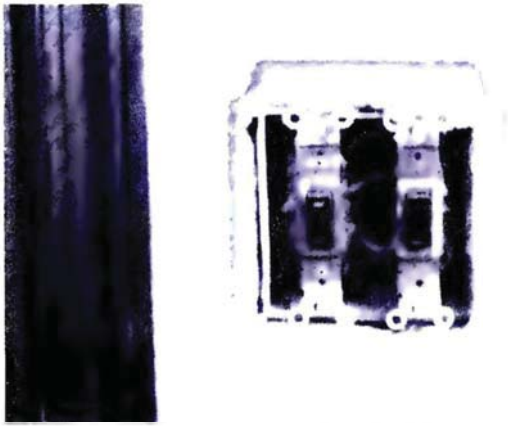


Photo 49
The hollow space behind a light switch panel.

In the spirit of in-your-face hiding, consider the blatantly visible fire alarm. The handle of a fire alarm provides an indention which

should be a safe place to tuck away a key for a few hours. This is theoretically a risky business, because if anyone walks over, the key is in plain sight. To test this idea, I (carefully) dropped a key into the handle of a fire alarm in a waiting area outside the restrooms of a busy bar. A week later I returned. The key was there, but I was too scared to remove it, thinking my clumsy fingers would surely set off the fire alarm. An unbent paper clip would do the trick, I suppose.

When I was a kid, one of the places I would hide stuff in my room was behind the light switch panel. I would unscrew the face plate to reveal electrical wiring and a convenient hiding space. Often you can use the same trick in a location in a public building, such as a bathroom or neglected corridor.

Pay Phones

Some pay phones have nooks and crannies in which small objects can be placed. There may be a shelf that you can shove something into. Usually the shelf is used to store a telephone book. You could even cut a piece of wood to fit evenly into the back of a phone booth shelf, thus making a false back and great secret hiding place. When the phone book is in place in front of it, no one will be the wiser.

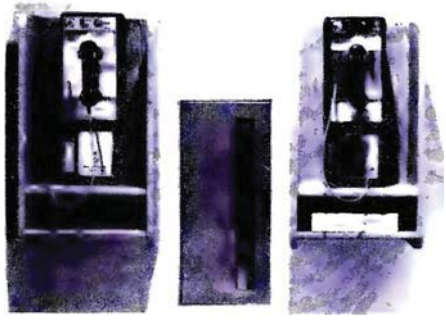


Photo 50

The wood shelf beneath these pay phones can be used as-is, or cut out a piece of wood that fits in, and use it as a fast false back.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards can be found in the corridors of meeting places, religious buildings, municipal centers, college classroom buildings, bus depots, and anywhere people tend to converge. You can use bulletin boards, and signs, as a way of concealing flat items.

Photo 51

Take a look at this photograph. Can you see where I hid my house key? Here the key is taped to the wall underneath one of the credit card ads. It is not directly under the ad — I buried it several layers deep, under three or four flyers.

The poster or flyer that you choose should be one that will stay hanging there for many weeks or months. Don't choose a scrawled,

photocopied flyer, especially if it has a date on it ("Come to the big garage sale this Sunday!"). Instead, choose a longer-lasting and more durable sign. For instance, you will often see signs such as those shown in Figures 10-12 which stay on a bulletin board forever. A large, colorful poster will stay up longer than a small flimsy flyer, especially if the poster has a pad of pull-off cards attached to it.

Figures 10 & 11
Examples of three (Figure 12 is on next page) kinds of permanent signs, good candidates for hiding stuff behind.

Figure 12

Some flyers have small boxes built into them, as a way of holding a number of folded pamphlets. Figure 13 shows some common varieties of box-posters. The one on the left is less like a box, and is actually a poster. The bottom of the poster is folded behind, and a slit was made in the front of the sheet in order to slide in the brochures.

The center and rightmost signs in Figure 13 are more expensively produced signs. In general, you're better off using these better-quality signs, which are often put out by large credit-card companies and magazine sellers. These signs are of a sturdier cardboard, and the people that are paid to plaster them everywhere use a heavy-duty staple gun to firmly affix the posters to the wall. Additionally, the companies tend to "check up" on the posters, keeping them stocked with flyers and restapling them if need be, thus ensuring the poster's (and your hiding spot's) longevity.[1]

[1] You can also find free-standing cardboard display boxes that are dispensing flyers. The boxes stand on countertops and window ledges in places of business, and are likely to remain there for many months.

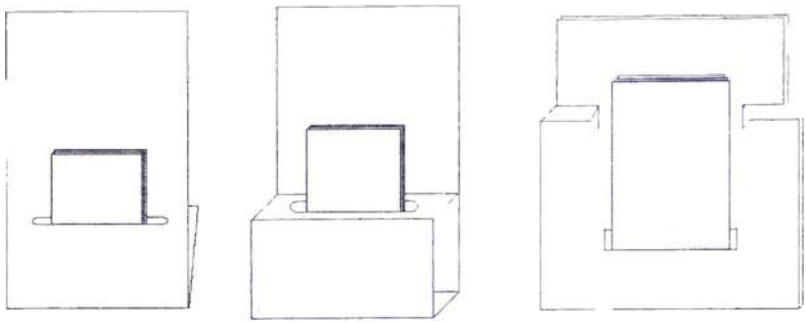


Figure 13
Three kinds of dispensers commonly found stapled to bulletin boards. Each offers a hiding spot for small objects.

Some buildings have "restricted" bulletin boards, by which I mean only "official" announcements or "approved" flyers may be put up on the bulletin board. Often they will use a rubber stamp on an officially approved flyer so that the maintenance staff knows which should be kept and which can be tossed. Be on the lookout for those kinds of situations, for if you put up your own sign it will likely be torn down by a zealous cleaning crew unless it has the proper designation.

If you want to really get into this, you can apply your own backing to the bulletin board. Remember, some public buildings (such as college classroom buildings) are open 24 hours a day, even when nobody is there to use them. After applying your own false cork backing to the bulletin board, re-cover it with flyers, and hide your papers underneath. That's virtually undetectable!

Signs and Clocks

Envelopes, keys, disks and other flat objects can also be hidden behind a sign or picture — preferably one that's always there and which no one notices because it's so much a part of the scenery

("No Smoking" signs, for instance, and signs that are out of easy reach).

Photo 52
A thin space behind this sign, but that's just enough room to slide in an envelope or note that you wish to give to someone else.

You can hide things behind wall clocks, but remember that clocks may need to be taken down for adjustments every now and then, and at least twice a year when Daylight Savings Time changes occur. In some buildings the clocks in each room are controlled by one central clock in the main office, so you never have to worry about any of the clocks (except that one) being taken down.

Finally, there is another kind of sign that can be used to conceal a thin envelope, check, or piece of paper. That is the sign under glass, as shown in Photo 53. The sign is a made of cardboard or

plastic, and is slipped into place under a piece of glass. The glass is screwed into the wall. Restaurants will use this kind of sign to display their menus out by the sidewalk. It is quite easy to slip your envelope or note behind the sign under the glass for later retrieval.

Photo 53
Another kind of sign, this one with a glass front. Stuff can be conveniently slid underneath the sign.

Holiday Decorations

When wintertime rolls around, stores and businesses start hanging up that red-and-green plastic garbage they call "holiday decorations."

Have you tried concealing a small item (such as a key) in a wreath? How about tucking a note into the red velvet ribbon wrapped around a post? Maybe you can add an extra ornament to the Christmas tree in the lobby of an office building. Your ornament, of course, has something special hidden inside it.

One year there was a small Christmas tree in the foyer of my girlfriend's apartment building. Under the tree were fake wrapped presents (really just small cardboard boxes wrapped up to look like gifts). All through the month we took to leaving little gifts under the tree for each other, which we would snatch away when no one was

looking. It started as a joke when I put a gift-wrapped box of Cracker Jacks under there and grabbed it, but she retaliated with a present for me, and then I for her. These sorts of seasonal decorations make fabulous hiding spots because everyone else is too polite to touch them.

Garbage Cans

From time immemorial, humans have created great works of art, poetry, music, and... garbage. That's why anywhere you go, you'll find garbage right there with you. And garbage cans.

Garbage cans, bins, receptacles, whatever they're called, they often allow you hiding-spot opportunities. One way to hide stuff in garbage cans is to simply throw away the item and then come back at a later time and retrieve the whole bag. Spies have been known to use garbage placed at the curbside for collection as a dead drop.

But let's look at garbage cans themselves, because they offer the best means to our ends. First of all, one type of very common garbage can has a pointed top like the roof of a house, with a swinging door in the roof. You can hide an object inside this "roof" and it's unlikely anyone will find it.

Most public garbage cans are lined with a plastic bag into which the garbage is tossed. Thus, you can hide stuff inside the garbage can but outside of the bag. That is, you can place objects in between the can and the bag. This only works when you can't see through the garbage can. For instance, a wire mesh can won't work, but most other garbage cans will.

The best way to employ this principle is to find yourself a square-circle can. This is a round garbage can inside a larger square casing. The hidden object has plenty of space between the can and the outer case.

Photo 54
A square-circle garbage can out in the woods.

Espionage officers will use faked garbage bags as dead drops. One dead drop found by the FBI was a garbage bag containing a Diet Coke bottle, a box of Q-tips, a soap wrapper, and a bottle of rubbing alcohol. This was the "fake garbage." All of this garbage had been thoroughly cleaned, so that nothing would drip out and so no smells would attract wildlife. To clean one's garbage is standard practice in the spy business. Incidentally, this particular dead drop contained a stack of 129 secret documents plus some coded letters wrapped in a plastic sandwich bag (Allen, 230).

Photo 55
The interior view shows what most people won't stop long enough to look at carefully — four good sized hiding compartments.

Behind Tiles and Molding

Public buildings tend to have wide plastic moldings on the walls down by the floors. The molding is there to keep the floor tiles in place, protect the walls from bumps, or for decorative reasons. However, as the building ages, the molding pulls away from the wall as it starts to get disattached from it. A similar problem occurs with tiles. As the building ages, the tiles start to drop like leaves in autumn. This is especially a problem in public restrooms, where the moisture in the air abets the loosening process.

You can slide thin objects behind the molding and then use some fast-drying glue to seal up all traces of your involvement. If you have more time on your hands, or if you're working in a far-off stairwell or basement, an empty hallway, or a classroom that's empty for the weekend, you may have enough time to hollow out a larger space behind the molding.

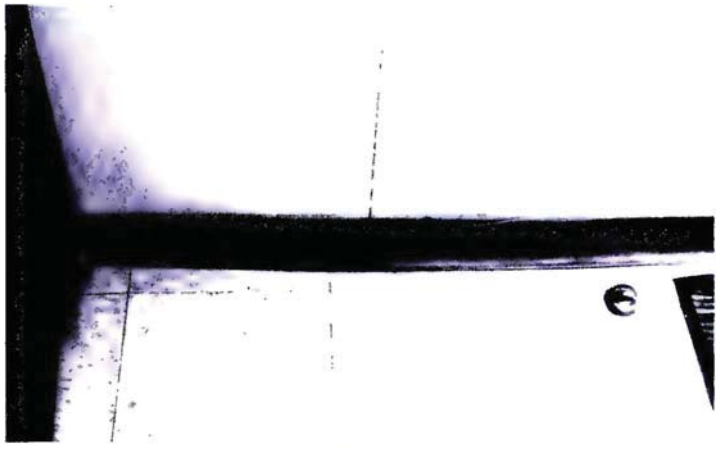


Photo 56

This molding is starting to tear away from the wall. Do the maintenance guys a favor and super glue it back into place — after sliding in the stuff you want to hide, that is. As an added bonus, this molding is directly behind a door that usually stays open.

Outside Buildings

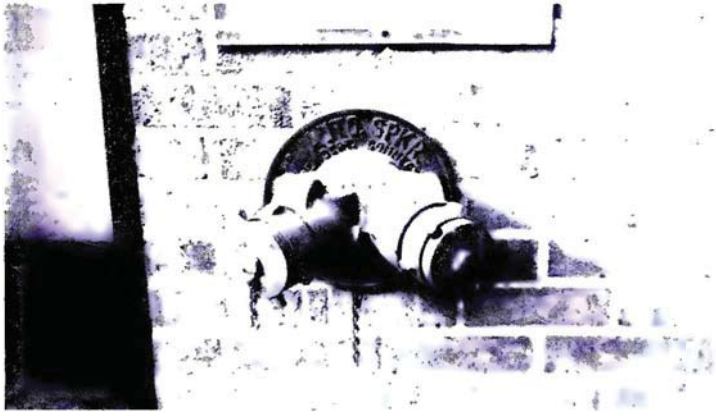


Photo 57

You might think water would spurt out if you opened these — but you'd be wrong. These spouts can be easily opened.

The outside walls of buildings make great hiding places because, like the Border Rule, nobody thinks about the exterior walls as a "place" where something can be hidden. Instead, people think of walls as the barrier which keeps them away from your hidden stuff. In fact, walls provide a plethora of hiding opportunities.

Many public buildings have spigots (and other pipes and weird-looking metal contraptions) jutting out of their sides for no apparent reason, because they are not used for any purpose. Small items can be tucked away in a spigot, especially in the winter months when spigots go unused or the water is shut off.

You'll often see fire-hydrant pipes built into the walls of parking garages and all sorts of public structures. These make great hiding spots, as they are fairly roomy and unlikely to be vandalized (people think that water will spurt out if they mess with them). There are two things to be wary of. First, it is very easy to cut yourself on the sharp metal threads as you screw on or screw off the pipe caps. Secondly, these pipes often undergo a yearly or twice-yearly inspection by local fire officials. If you see a tag hanging on the pipes, or an official document posted nearly, check the dates listed on it so you can determine when the inspections usually are.

Photo 58
Another kind of spout attached to a pipe.

Another idea is to find a building with shutters, and hang your goodies behind them. An ivy-covered wall will also provide a wealth of hiding spots, the only trouble being it may be hard to find exactly where you slipped your cache into the mess of vines.

Photo 59

This shutter normally has flyers stapled to it (as you can see by all the staples and tacks.) It was also stuck in an open position from its most recent coats of white paint.

If a building has wooden siding, sometimes the overlap can be enough to hide a small item beneath. Similarly, stuff can be inserted underneath aluminum siding, but you must be careful that it doesn't disappear beneath the surface.

You can see from all of these above examples that there are a lot of good hiding spots to be found on outside walls. But before you hide something, make sure you choose the very best wall you can to do the hiding in. You want to choose a back or side wall that is neglected, one that does not have any sidewalk paths running alongside it, no windows looking out onto it, or perhaps one that adjoins an alley filled with rotting garbage. When hiding, you always want to choose the most out-of-the-way hiding spots.

Photo 60

Pulling open the shutter reveals a few inches of space. Bang a nail into the wood and you could hang something back there. Or simply use our good friend Mr. Duct Tape to attach an object.

Photo 61

A side wall where no one has gone or looked at or trespassed for ages, as can be seen by the high weeds, and lack of doors and windows. Look for such disused areas to do your hiding.

Under Patios, Stairs, and Ramps

Outside public buildings you will find all sorts of patios, staircases and ramps which can be used for your hiding pleasure. A staircase like the one pictured below is wooden, which is helpful because you can pound a nail or hook into its underside, and hang a bag underneath to hold your stuff.

Photo 62

Photo 63

Photo 64
Photos 62, 63, and 64 are examples of structures attached to the outside of buildings. Each of these offers its own kind of hiding spot.

Public Restrooms

Public restrooms offer a shitload of hiding places. People don't really look around in them, they just do their business and get out of there as quickly as possible. Furthermore, there are no security cameras in restrooms as there often are in other public places. If you can find a private restroom-for-one, such as small restaurants provide, then you're in good shape. If you can find one that's a stinky, smelly, gas-station restroom somewhere, then you've really got it made!

Even spies have used public restrooms as hiding places. For example, a Soviet agent (circa 1973) spying at a New England military installation was known to hide his reports in the paper-towel dispenser in a restroom at the Boston air-shuttle terminal. Actually, the reason we know about this case is because this particular spy was caught after the dispenser flew open and

official-looking documents spewed everywhere across the restroom floor, "to be retrieved by a steward who was an avid reader of spy stories" (Copeland, 137). Okay, so that didn't work out the way he planned it, but I'm sure you will be more careful!

Photo 65
A paper towel dispenser — just like the professionals use — can be opened with the push of a button.

There is a scene in the movie *Hackers* in which the protagonist hacker has to hide a computer disk that contains incriminating evidence on it. The hacker knows he must put it someplace where it will not be traced back to him, but where another of his hacker friends can locate it and take it from the hiding spot. In the movie, the hacker slides the disk behind a condom dispenser on the wall of his high school's restroom. Later he is arrested, and his female hacker friend nonchalantly walks into the men's room and pulls out

the disk, in front of a gawking group of teenage boys. And she buys a condom too, for good measure.

I think public restrooms offer some of my favorite public hiding places. Public restrooms have an assortment of hiding places in the form of handrails, handlebars, pipes, stalls, walls, toilet paper rolls, soap dispensers, ashtrays, coverings, air fresheners, gadgets and boxes adhered to the walls to dispense paper covers for the toilet seats and the like. Very often there are cabinets or a ledge under the row of sinks where objects can be hidden. Sometimes you will make exclusive finds, such as a broken tampon dispenser on which you can place your own lock, thereby locking others out and locking your stuff in. Hollow handrails can be unscrewed from the wall with a common screwdriver. Stash your cash inside and reattach to the wall for a perfect long-term cache. Many times the bottoms of the stalls have a metal base which can be pulled up to reveal a hiding place inside. Be careful when undertaking this sort of experimentation, so that people in neighboring stalls or over by the sinks or urinals can't look under the wall and see what you're up to.

Photo 66

The metal cap atop this urinal can be lifted on its pipe to reveal some space underneath. Bathrooms are filled with useful metal widgets such as this.

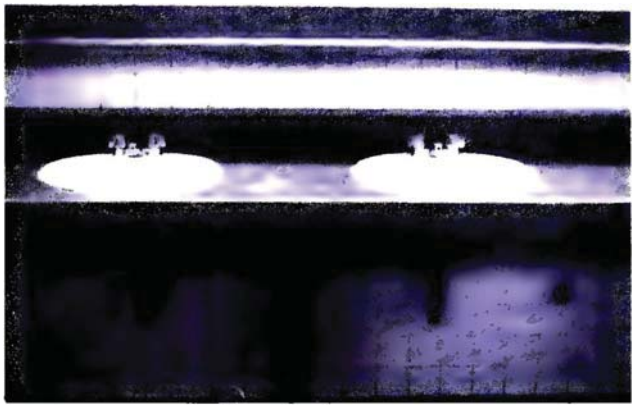


Photo 67
A typical sink ledge under which you can stash some stuff.

Photo 68
These cabinets look locked, but give them a try and you may be surprised to find they open easily.

One of the all-time "best" restrooms I've found was the men's room in a Sbarro's pizza restaurant in Philadelphia. That bathroom contained all of these hiding spots:

- wall outlet that could be unscrewed
- garbage can
- barstool (small notes could be hidden in the rubber caps on the stool's legs, or slipped underneath the upholstery)
- mirrors which could be pulled away from the wall
- underneath toilet/sink
- toilet tank

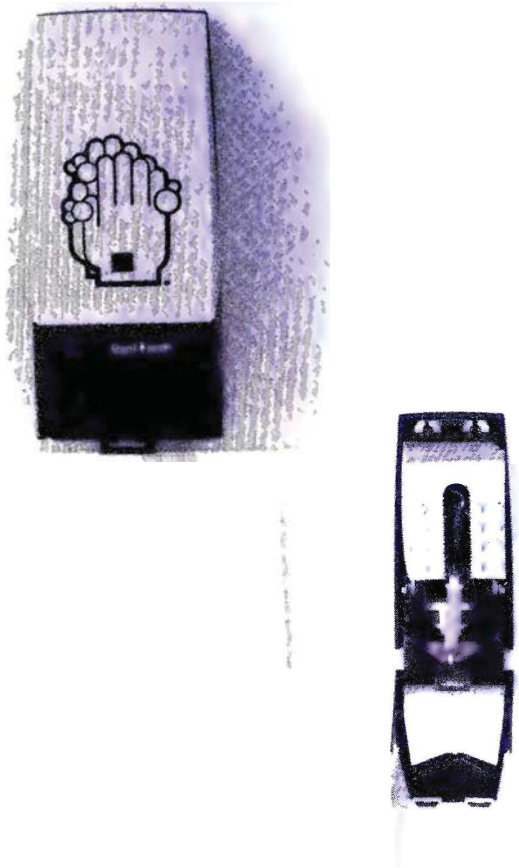
The last two items are worth mentioning in more detail. Underneath sinks and toilets there are often hollow places in which items can be stashed. The hollow spaces are formed by the curves and contours of the sink and toilet (and urinals) in the bathroom. Sometimes you can simply stuff objects into these crevices. Other times, some duct tape is useful for holding the object in place. When you find yourself all alone in a public restroom, you can feel around underneath — I've even laid down on my back on the floor to see better. Poke around — you may be surprised by what you find! (Okay, wear rubber gloves if it makes you feel better.)

How Do I Get Into Those Boxes?

Public restrooms have all these boxes mounted on the walls — soap dispensers, paper-towel dispensers, and whatnot. But how do you get inside them to hide things inside? Well, it's a different story for each box. Mostly it's a matter of taking a good look at the box and figuring out how to get inside. Some boxes have a keyhole where a key must be inserted. The keyhole is usually much larger than any keyhole you're used to seeing, and does not require an exact key to fit it. Try using a screwdriver first, or a skeleton key or anything key-shaped that you happen to have with you.

Other boxes rely on a button that, when pushed, lets the plastic casing snap open. The soap dispenser pictured in Photos 69 and 70 has its magic button hidden way up the front. Like a gynecologist,

you must insert a finger deep up inside the front of the box to get to the button. Press it, and the whole front of the box flips off to allow access to the inside.



Photos 69 and 70

Some exploration of the dispenser will reveal how it was meant to be opened.

In short, every dispenser manufactured has its own trick for getting it open. If you see a keyhole, you know you need a key or a key lookalike. If no keyhole is present, try for the hidden button. If neither is apparent, or if you still can't get the box open, you might want to either move on to a different bathroom (there are plenty of them in the world) or keep staking out the place until a maintenance person accidentally leaves the box slightly ajar. Usually, being able to see the insides of the box gives you valuable clues as to its workings. In the case of the soap dispenser pictured here, full instructions for opening the dispenser can be found on the box of soap inside.

The Toilet Tank

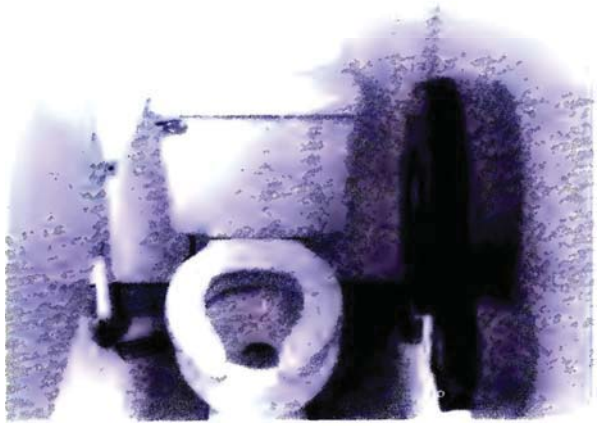


Photo 71
The toilet tank. Hard to find in public bathrooms, but some do exist!

Another handy spot, if you can find one, is in the toilet tank. True, most public restrooms employ toilets without tanks, but it is still possible to find public toilets that have tanks. Naturally, you wouldn't want to hide your stuff directly in the water. One idea is

to go to a hardware store or flea market and collect some plumbing junk, then screw it together to make a piece of apparatus that looks like something that would be found in a toilet tank. Conceal your stuff inside it, and drop it in the tank. The cleaning crew won't know the difference if they happen to look inside.

One method that I tried for a little while is an "Eco-Box", which a friend and I used in a children's science museum and aquarium. The science museum is a perfect excuse for using the box. You see, ecologists recommend putting a brick or bottle in the toilet tank to conserve water. With a brick or other object taking up space, less water will be flushed away. It is both ecologically and economically intelligent to conserve water, and that's exactly what it says on the label on my Eco-Box. Here's how I made it, and how you can make your own.

1. Go to your local five-and-dime, and pick up a small transparent Rubbermaid container.
2. Type up or print out a label like the following:

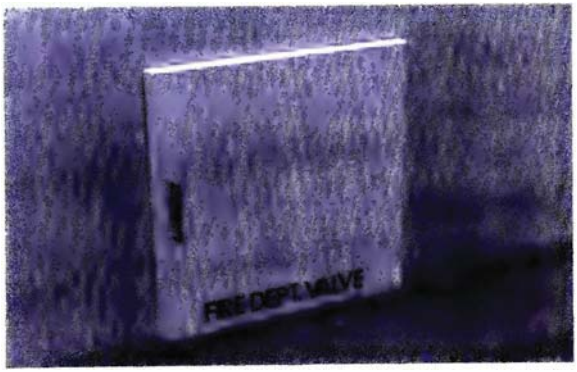
> Dear Ecologically Concerned Citizen,
> Please place this "Eco-Box" inside your toilet tank. You will save money because your toilet will use less water to flush. You will also be helping to save the environment by using less water. Thank you for using the "Eco-Box" to save money, and helping to save the environment.
>
> — Society of Naturalists

3. Cover the inside of the container with contact paper, but attach the label to the contact paper inside the container so that it shows through the top of the box.
4. Now put your stuff into the box.
5. If you want, you can use super glue to ensure that the Eco-Box stays securely shut.
6. Close the lid (listen to it burp), and submerge it in your favorite science-center restroom toilet tank.

7. As an added bonus, you might want to use some of that toilet-cleaning blue stuff in the water, so that anyone looking at the toilet will see that it is already clean and doesn't need to be cleaned again.

Stairwells

Most people take the elevator, especially in skyscrapers, so it's a good idea to take a look at the stairwells in your life. Often you'll find cabinets and doored niches in the walls which were used to store fire hydrants and now can be used to hide things (or maybe they still do hold fire hydrants).



Photos 72 & 73
Typical example of the type of little "closet" that can be found in stairwells. This one is being used, but others are empty and filled with trash.

Stairwells also may have a radiator, often unused, which has a door in it. This is also a handy hiding spot.

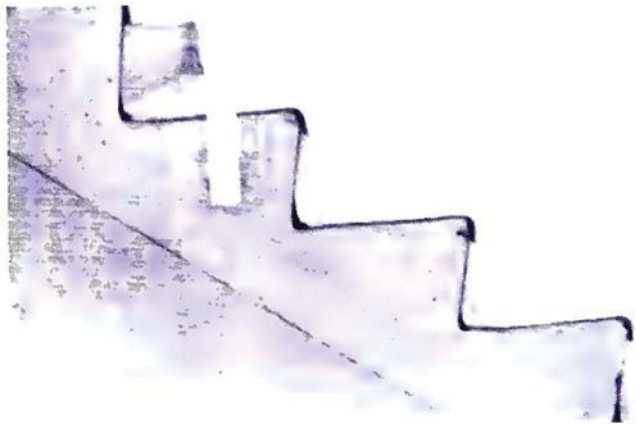


Photo 74
You can just barely see the tiny crevice of space under the rubber matting of this staircase.

In this stairwell (above), the rubber matting creates tiny crevices at the right angle of each step. A rolled up note or other small object could be placed there. This same stairwell has many cracks in its cement, which make especially viable hiding spots, since to access the cracks one has to lean over the edge of the stairwell (which no casual passer-by is likely to do).

Theater Exchange

The man glanced at his watch and stepped into the theater lobby. People were milling about. He handed his ticket to a ticket-taker in

a red vest and round hat, who said, "You've missed the first half! This here is intermission!"

"That's okay. I seen the first half already." The man passed the bar and then walked into the theater. An usher said, "You seem lost. May I help you, sir?"

"No, no. Just looking for someone." The man wanted to wait until the house lights went down before proceeding to his seat. While he waited, he scanned the theater. No one there who looked suspicious — and yet, he thought, if they *were* suspicious they wouldn't look it.

The lights blinked, but the man remained standing at the rear of the theater. The usher seemed worried. "Sir, may I show you to your seat?"

"Thank you, no," the man calmly replied. Finally the lights went off for good, and the curtain parted. The man proceeded to his seat. There were two seats, actually. Two empty seats. His was the one on the left. The man sat. Looking down, he could barely make out in the darkness the shadow outline of a briefcase pushed under the empty seat beside him. *Good*, he thought to himself, *Mr. X left the briefcase there just like he said he would.* He considered this a moment. *I could take it and leave*, he mused. *But I might as well stay and enjoy the show.* This was the classiest illegal drug purchase he had ever been a part of. Might as well enjoy it.

The cost of two theater tickets may be prohibitively expensive for a simple one-way transaction. Luckily, there are cheaper ways to make a drop-off. Secret agents have been known to make brush contact in dark movie theaters. These are all subsets of a larger idea, that of Staking a Claim.

Staking a Claim

Staking a claim is a way of doing an anonymous one-way, or sometimes a two-way, transaction. The idea here is to stake a claim on some public property, walk away, and allow the other person to

pick up the package. You can do this any place where people temporarily declare a piece of the public world as belonging to them.

Here's how it works. The picnic table is a useful one to use for demonstration, because it can be done at a neutral location like a rest stop along the highway. This has the advantage of being highly unlikely that either party will be spotted by people they know at a distant rest stop. What you do is set yourself up a picnic table with a tablecloth and some food, and pack the object you're hiding at the bottom of the ice bucket. After setting out your cache, you can saunter off to a pay phone and call the other party and tell them where the picnic is. Give them directions to the rest area. You have complete anonymity and can feel safe knowing no one else will come along and find the hidden object.

There are other places where you can stake a claim. For example, a beach blanket at the shore, or even a table in a cafeteria. Set up the beach blanket, or establish yourself as sitting at the table, and then walk away and inform the other person they can come and pick up the object or item.

Conclusion

In this chapter we looked at general traits of public buildings that offer hiding spots. Most public buildings have such things as rest-rooms, stairwells, corridors, or outside walls that may be useful in hiding.

Chapter Nine: Some Specific Public Buildings To Consider

In this chapter we will take a more specific look at some public buildings. Just by going out into the world and looking around you will discover all sorts of unique and special hiding places that would never have occurred to you otherwise. Stores often have storage space which the public can readily access. For instance, department stores and clothing stores will have cabinets and drawers which are used for excess merchandise. Carpet stores have many rolls of carpet in which an item can be hidden.

Many of the best hiding spots are ones that exist because of some special feature of the landscape or architecture that no place else in the world possesses. For instance, it may not occur to you to hide items in a drug store, but if you go to a local drug store, you may find they have a certain kind of shelf that lends itself especially well to hiding things, or maybe they happen to have an unlocked storage shed in their backyard. You see, a hiding place does not have to be specifically related to the locale in which you are hiding the item, and so the only way to find these unique spots is by scouting out spots on your own.

Some hiding spots are unique to a job or position you hold. For instance, maybe you volunteer to help the homeless... and subsequently you have access to the "clothing dumpster" in front of the food store. Or maybe your work gives you access to the "eyeglasses donation box," a locked mailbox where folks can donate eyeglasses

and eyeglass cases. Both would make convenient hiding spots. A busboy or waiter could be the "giver" in a one-way transaction, by rolling up a document in a napkin while setting a table before the secret agent arrives for a meal. Some jobs are themselves part of a one-way transaction, such as those of a postal worker or delivery boy.

In any case, it's well worth your while to think about how your unique location, situation, or occupation offers you the chance to hide objects in public places. And to get you started thinking, here is a list of many different kinds of public places, to help you think of more unique methods of hiding.

Airports

It used to be that you could leave suitcases on the baggage carousel at airports and let your gangster pals come by to pick up the baggage — a nice and neat one-way transaction of goods. But times have changed. Nowadays at most airports the turnstyles are one-way, meaning you can't go in and place luggage on the carousel. And most airports have a guard that checks everyone's baggage as they walk out of the carousel area. If you don't have a claim ticket, you can't walk out with someone else's suitcase. Still, there are some airports left that don't go so overboard on the security. If you want to try this classic technique of public hiding, stake out some local airports first and see what their policies are in this area.

Amusement Parks

Amusement parks are perhaps the quintessential examples of public areas that are controlled by private organizations, as was discussed at the beginning of this book. Amusement parks are large, sprawling regions with lots of people (if you need to hide amongst a crowd) and a good number of easily accessible hiding

places that are virtually undetectable given the fact that visitors at amusement parks are looking at big things, the big rides, the big shows, and are unlikely to focus on the miniatura around them. It is very easy to sit down on a low wall to rest awhile, meanwhile secretly slipping a packet into the shrubbery behind you. There are some hazards to be wary of: cleaning crews and security precautions. Because of all the people who trample through the place each day, the park is bound to take elaborate security precautions including hidden cameras and plainclothed guards. If you are detected hiding a parcel somewhere, especially if you had to walk out of eyesight, behind a fence or building to hide it, they will probably become quite suspicious very quickly and investigate for fear that you were planting a bomb or using drugs or alcohol.

In the summer of 1971, a worker at Disneyland actually found a bomb that was publicly hidden along the track of the People Mover in a publicly-accessible place. It was a shoebox with wires sticking out of it, and the bomb squad was called in. They confirmed it was a live bomb.

On the other hand, high school kids visit Disneyland for the sole purpose of getting bombed. Disneyland started hosting "Grad Nite" in 1961 as a fun and safe way for graduating high schoolers to celebrate the end of their first twelve years of education. The kids decided they didn't like the park's no-alcohol policy, and so they started devising means to a boozey end by using public hiding spots within the park:

> As the park began patting down guests and searching purses at the gate, the teens got more creative. They visited the park earlier in the afternoon and planted bottles in the lockers. In turn, the park would clear out the lockers before each Grad Nite. Then grads came in early to bury cans on Tom Sawyer Island. So Disneyland got metal detectors. Or they would stash alcohol in the thick vegetation in the back areas of Autopia and try to find it that night. So if cars didn't come back for a while, attendants would go check and find a few kids walking around

> out of their cars. "Oh, I-ah-I lost my wallet...," they would nervously explain. Security caught one guy hanging from a tree before a Grad Nite with a bottle in each sock. Another hid a bottle of booze in the Rivers of America to have it chilled. Sometimes the park leaves clever notes in place of the unearthed alcohol (Koenig, 130).

If you decided to use similar hiding tactics, you will have an advantage over the high-school kids since park guards probably would not automatically be as suspicious of you as they were of the partying youngsters. However, it would be wise to be cautious, since within those walls, Big Brother (probably wearing black mouse ears) is watching over you.

A more licit method is to use storage lockers found in any amusement park or water park. These are especially advantageous for one-way and two-way transactions of large loads, since the key can be easily transmitted to the other person by using a smaller public hiding space, such as in a public bathroom or in a floral arrangement. If you are arranging a multi-person transaction, make sure you work out beforehand exactly which lockers will be used. Some larger parks (such as Disney) have multiple locker setups at different areas on the facilities.

Disney, incidentally, offers a handy service at EPCOT Center which can be used to anonymously transmit loads to another party. The service, called Package Pick-up, allows packages that are purchased during a day at the theme park to be forwarded to another location so you don't have to schlep them around with you all day. When you make your purchase, ask the salesperson to send the items to Package Pick-up. At the end of the day the items will be waiting at a pre-specified central location for you to pick up. Packages can also be forwarded to a guest room at a Disney resort hotel (Sehlinger, 245). There are several ways to use this service to your advantage. If you wanted to transmit an item to another party, you could pick up a box of something in one of the Disney stores, slip your item inside, and then have it forwarded to that central

location where the other person retrieves it. Or if you trust the person behind the counter, you might simply slip your extra envelope or package into the shopping bag and have it forwarded.

Band-Practice Spaces

Young rock bands in the making like to make noise, but their parents and neighbors really don't dig it. So bands can rent out practice space in a business designed for that purpose. The practice space is usually in an industrial warehouse-type building, and bands may go there every week or every few weeks to get their act together. It occurs to me that such a place might be very suitable to investigate for your public hiding concerns, especially if you or some friends of yours rent out practice space on a continuous basis. You can check out the space and see if there are opportunities for hiding stuff within, such as behind molding, light-switch plates, under paneling, and the like.

Banks

Banks have certain shortcomings as far as hiding places go, since security cameras and a heightened sense of security about the place are the norm. There are usually potted plants and sofa cushions to hide stuff in, and perhaps even an entry area with a footmat or piece of carpeting to wipe your feet on which you can hide something under. Banks also have areas more specific to them, such as desks where you can stand and fill out deposit forms. You may be able to hide things in the compartments with all the forms or even stick something underneath the desk itself, but these seem to be too risky to even try. In fact, the second phone call we got from the Concealment Project letter was from a high-school student who had noticed our letter stuck underneath the writing desk at the bank when the baby she was babysitting crawled underneath the desk to pee on the carpet.

Probably the only really safe way to hide anything in a bank is to get yourself a safe-deposit box. Make like con artist and impostor Frank Abagnale, Jr., who used deception and a friendly smile to convince others that he was a Pan Am pilot, doctor, sociology professor and lawyer. As a result of his imposterizations, check forging and other wily crimes, Abagnale collected a small fortune for himself. But before fleeing off to Mexico to avoid the law, he used bank safe-deposit boxes to his advantage: "I did not take the entire proceeds of my crime spree with me," he wrote. "Like a dog with access to a butcher-shop bone and forty acres of soft ground, I buried my loot all over the United States, stashing stacks of cash in bank safe-deposit boxes from coast to coast and from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border." (Abagnale, 138). This master imposter used fake IDs to procure the boxes, of course, and that will be necessary to ensure paper anonymity, if not visual anonymity.

Beaches

At beaches you can hide things in a sand castle, or under the pier or dock or boardwalk. To do a one-way transaction you can stake a claim by laying down a beach blanket and some towels, and putting your stash into a plastic bucket. Go off and get some ices while you make a phone call to the other party and direct them to your beach blanket. Stand back from afar and watch as they pick up the item. You'll be able to see them, but they won't know who the hell you are out of all those people on the sand.

Bleachers

Under the bleachers at a high school football field or at a park may or may not be a good hiding place. First, you want to check out the amount of garbage there already. If it's clean as a whistle and the grass is nicely trimmed, forget it. If it's littered with beer

bottles and condom wrappers, you've found yourself a good place to hide stuff, especially in the colder autumn and winter months.

Book Stores

Find yourself a small mom and pop book store, not a nationwide chain. You'll find the best hiding spots in the little stores because the places are a mess to begin with: books laying flat on the shelves, on the floor, stacked up on reading chairs and in cartons every place you look.

Photo 75
One way to hide small items is inside books. The bindings of hardcover books usually have an opening that can be used, or just shove the object to be hidden into the last pages of a dusty, boring tome.

Carnivals and County Fairs

Amusement parks were mentioned before, and this is the same concept. Even if the fair is not in town, how about at the abandoned ticket booth or auxiliary buildings that stay on the premises year round?

Cemeteries

Most cemeteries have the problem of being well-cared for by gardeners, lawn-care workers, and sometimes even the state Parks Department, but they do have shorter-term hiding potential.

Construction Sites

Again, there are numerous hiding opportunities here. Construction sites have piles of dirt and rock in which stuff can be hidden, as well as equipment, machinery and trucks that have more crannies than Granny's fanny. If you hide stuff inside a pipe or tube or other object that will eventually be used in the construction project, be smart about it and pick one at the bottom of the pile so that it will be used last.

Photo 76
Construction trucks make a perfect pick-up site for a one-way or two-way transaction.

Photo 77
There are always all sorts of pipes and junk laying around in work areas, and you can conceal items inside that junk.

Department Stores

As you're walking around department stores you'll notice displays with cabinets underneath, where they store excess merchandise. The cabinets are usually unlocked and easy to get into. In some stores the sales racks are full of merchandise so hideous that no one pulls it off the shelf to look at it; sometimes you see the same outfits there for months. Things can be stored in the pockets, and one-way transactions can be done this way as well.

Dressing rooms may also offer a private place to hide items, depending on what furniture is available in the changing room. In addition, sometimes you will see a spare dressing room being used as a storage facility with decapitated mannequins, coat hangers, and all sorts of stuff just thrown into it haphazardly. Well, you can throw in your own stuff to hide there as well.

Let me tell you about a case of public hiding that didn't work out too well. I was in a Kmart and I was looking through the Pez they had for sale. For those too far away from their childhoods to remember, Pez is candy that comes in a colorful plastic dispenser. The top of the Pez dispenser has the molded plastic head of a cartoon character or teddy bear or some other figure. Anyway, my sister has a collection of Pez dispensers, so I was looking through to see if there were any new ones that she didn't already have. There was one with the head of Gonzo, one of the Muppet characters, that I wasn't sure if she had it or not, so I decided that I would hide the dispenser in the store, ask her, and then either she or I could come back later and purchase it.

Well, I walked around that Kmart until I found the perfect spot. First of all, I decided the best place to hide the Pez dispenser would be somewhere far away from the candy aisle; that way it would be less likely to be put away. I found a back corner of the store where there was a gardening section. One aisle was filled with watering cans and stacked planter pots. I thought it would be a good idea to hide the dispenser inside a stack of planter pots.

On the top shelf, way out of reach of most people, were some hideous, ugly blue pots with a weird design on them. I thought, no one in their right mind would want to buy one of those pieces of garbage! I put the Pez dispenser inside the stack of pots on the top shelf. Good hiding spot.

My sister was away at college. I sent her e-mail, and a few days later received her reply; she did not have the Gonzo Pez. The next time I had a chance I went back to the store. It might've been a week or ten days later by then. Confidently, I walked to the back of the store, pulled down the stack of pots, and was surprised to find the Pez dispenser sitting, staring at me, in the topmost pot. I was glad it was still there, but it shouldn't have been in the top pot! I had put it two or three pots into the stack. Anyway, I guess the moral is no matter how careful you are there's always a chance that something or someone will come along and disturb your cache. If

this were something more important than a Pez dispenser I certainly would have bought the thing and took it home with me, or I would have found a safer spot to stuff it in. Ask yourself: Is it important enough to spend money and waste your time finding the best hiding spot in the world? Or is it OK to just throw it in a pot in a store? In this case, someone had most likely seen the dispenser but left it there — so it didn't really concern me. But if I were hiding something more critical, such as naked photographs of a senator, I wouldn't want anyone to even see them, let alone disturb them. You have to let the importance of the thing be your guide.

Dumpsters

You can hide things for a few days in or behind a Dumpster. Most Dumpsters are also raised off the ground slightly, allowing for things to be slid underneath them as well. You have a few good days of hiding until the garbage truck comes and your Dumpster... gets dumped. A Dumpster being used at a construction site or parked on someone's driveway where they're having extensive remodeling done to their house is likely to be emptied less frequently. Another alternative is to find the Dumpster that an apartment or office complex uses for recycling cans, bottles or cardboard. Those, too, are usually emptied less often.

Fast-Food Restaurants

Fast-food places are usually aseptic, sparkling clean places, because the owners want to counteract the negative, greasy image that most folks have of fast-food joints. Cleanliness is always a warning sign of trouble ahead, for if people are cleaning up the place, there's the distinct possibility that they will clean out your hiding spot.

On the whole, I'd advise you only to hide stuff in a fast-food place if you're in a pinch and it's only for a short period of time, like if you have to quickly get an object to another person, or you

want to drop something off temporarily while you go into the store next door. In those cases, there are plenty of places to hide things. Fast-food restaurants have napkin dispensers and straw dispensers that can be opened up and stuff shoved in. There are metal bins containing eating utensils. Lift up the bins and stash stuff underneath them. Another big problem with fast-food places is that they're so small everyone can see what you're doing. For instance, they usually have great garbage cans in which to hide stuff — the garbage cans are encased inside a larger wooden or plastic cabinet, and it would be wonderful to be able to hide stuff in the space between the cabinet and can. Unfortunately, you can't do that because the garbage can is right in the middle of where everyone is sitting and eating. (The first phone call we got telling us where the Concealment Project note had been found was as a result of placement at a Burger King. We had hidden the note along with an audio cassette tape in a niche underneath the "fixings bar.")

So, on the whole, fast-food places have a lot of potential hiding spots, but you should use them only in dire circumstances, and then only with extreme caution.

Furniture Stores

Furniture stores are loaded with hiding places: inside drawers, seat cushions, under stuff, behind, inside, but you have to be careful because people are always poking and prodding around, examining the merchandise before they buy it.

Gas Stations

Gas stations can be used for a one-way or possibly even a two-way transaction. The best place to do this is near the air pump. The air pump is usually way off to one side, sometimes out of eyeshot of the young punks working there, who don't care a shit about you anyway, not for the minimal amount of money they're making, anyway. Depending on the layout of the gas station you may have

bushes by the air pump, or a fence that you can hide things behind, or even a pile of junk. When you or someone else parks a car in front of the air pump, it's also blocking the view behind it, giving oneself cover in which to hide an item or retrieve a hidden item.

Golf Courses

Hiding stuff on a golf course relies on the "too much" principle: There's just too much golf course for anyone else to look through all of it. There are always going to be some places on the course where you can hide stuff and no one else will ever think to look. You can bury objects in a sand trap, in the woods or fields, in tall weeds, or even under water.

Hardware Stores

Lots of drawers and doors to hide things in and behind. Also, you'll find pegboard displays which you can lift a little and slip stuff under. Or try sliding something underneath a display lawn mower!

Hotels

Photo 78

You can find little "living rooms" in the hallways of fancy hotels. The furniture ranges from tables and chairs, to end tables, and sometimes even a TV cabinet. Hiding spaces abound.

Fancy hotels have furniture in the lobbies and hallways. Sometimes you can find entire living-room arrangements off in some far corner on the 23rd floor. There might be plush sofas, in whose cushions you can hide stuff. There may be end tables with drawers or cabinets in which to conceal objects.

Johnny-on-the-Spots

The Disgust Factor at work! If you can withstand the smell in one of these public booth toilets, then you may find a suitable hiding spot within.

Laundromats

The laundromat is a good way to do a brush contact. For instance, you can make an "accidental" exchange of laundry baskets, each of which has something concealed within the pile of shirts and undies. Or, if what you have to transfer can withstand a washing, put it inside a zippered blanket or pillow case, and throw that in the laundry. The other party can come by and take out the load when it's done, completing the transaction.

Libraries

You have to be careful of libraries, because they are known to look after their collections. People are always coming along and shelving books, dusting, putting things in order, and generally cleaning up the place. For these reasons, much of a library's hiding power comes from finding the neglected areas. For example, the card-catalog.

Photo 79
A dying breed, the card-catalog drawer. Here a mini-tape recorder can be seen inside.

In this day and age, many libraries are turning to computers to replace their old card-catalog system. However, after laboring so many years on alphabetizing, weeding, and feeding the card-catalog, they are reluctant (or unable to) get rid of the system. And so it sits unused somewhere in the back of the library, virtually ignored, while people choose instead to use the faster, more reliable, more informative, computer terminals. Thus opens up several good possibilities for hiding. A small packet can be stuck behind a drawer, or even better, if the cards don't go all the way to the back, a package can be stuck in the empty recess. In this photograph you can see how a cover of cards has been made by "hollowing out" a large number of index cards.

If you use this technique, you must choose your drawer wisely. One too low will be pulled entirely out so that the reader doesn't have to bend down too far. If the drawer is too high, it will also be pulled out for the same reason. Drawers may also be pulled out if there is no writing room nearby. So make sure the drawer you select is at a comfortable reading level, and is near a desk so that

the reader doesn't have to pull it out to write down the information it contains.

Hiding in the Stacks

If you decide to hide your cache amongst the books, choose an uninteresting, boring tome with a title such as *Advanced Calculus and Integral Linealizations with Factoring*. Do not choose *The Horny Slut Phone Book*. Musty and dusty books are likely to be discarded if the library is an active one. If it is a small or inactive library, in a town with little literary interest, then the books will tend to be older, and the collection will remain static. Thus, you have a better chance of hiding stuff in the stacks. Your best bet is to simply push your stash into the empty space behind a row of books and at the rear of the bookshelf. Remember the rule of Coming and Going! Your stash may be perfectly hidden to you, but if the bookshelf is approachable from the other side you'll have to make certain that no visible signs remain, even when a book or two is pulled off the shelf.

Of course, there is also the "hollow book" ploy. If you choose to use this one, you'll want to forge the spine labels so that no one passing will suspect a thing. Make sure you choose a most uninteresting book for this endeavor. I have two hollowed-out books that I made myself out of discarded library books that I retrieved from a Dumpster. I used razor blades to hollow out the books, and then glued together the pages. They are thick books in a foreign language, and have a capacity of approximately 16 cubic inches of space.

Some library shelves are high enough that they are above the line of vision, and yet you can reach up there and leave something for a later pick up. Librarians know that it's a common ploy for people who have forgotten their library cards to hide desired items on top of shelves and come back later for them.

The reference department will often have microfilm available, kept in lots of little boxes which are ideal for hiding a small load.

Find a spare box lying around, one with no label or a boring label, and put your things inside. You might even type up your own boring label for the box. Stash it away in the rear of the most inaccessible, out-of-the-way shelf or drawer you can find, so that nobody will ever take it out to use it.

Libraries also have all sorts of file cabinets, vertical archives, and drawers full of microfiche, sheet music and photographs. All of these drawers and cabinets (especially those containing boring government statistics that nobody looks at) are additional places to hide things. You can use the drawers as-is, or make up a phony file folder in which to hide the items.

Staking a Library Claim

Finally, the library allows us to return to our old friend, Staking a Claim. Claim a desk for yourself by putting down books and a notebook and some pens, as well as the object you wish to transfer to the other person. You might conceal the object inside the notebook, in a book bag or knapsack you leave nearby, or in the pocket of a coat you drape over the chair. Follow the usual procedure of setting up the table, then go off and inform the other person that they can pick up the object and explain to them where it is hidden.

Recently, I was browsing through a library and was shocked to see what some moron had left strewn about on his table. The student had gotten up to use the photocopier. Left behind on his table were the usual stack of books and papers — and the faceplate from his stereo and his car keys! Not very bright at all. It made me wonder why he bothered getting that kind of stereo if he was going to be so careless with it. In any case, I brought up this little cautionary tale to point out how even something as tempting as car keys and a stereo faceplate will be left alone because most people (including me) are just too damn honest to steal. Although God knows that guy deserved to have his stuff stolen just for being so careless with it!

Luggage

A travel store, or the luggage section of a department store, has some good storage spaces for public hiding. Make sure you only hide stuff in display models, because you don't want someone buying the luggage and going home with it. You may even want to lock the luggage, though the locks on luggage are so poor that it's possible for almost anyone to break in without the key or combination. As an experiment, I hid zippered bags containing the Concealment Project letter in luggage in a few different stores to see what would happen. I checked on the bags every few weeks, and they were always there. Perhaps the most important rule is to make sure the display luggage you choose will be there later when you come to claim your cache.

Municipal Buildings

A public office building most likely has bulletin boards, stairwells, corridors, potted plants, and who knows what other hiding conveniences? Of course, the municipal building usually has cops, too, so you gotta be careful.

Nurseries

Plant nurseries provide the ultimate hiding-out-of-doors experience. Nurseries are home to hundreds of potted plants, piles of stones and wood chips, landscaping materials, fountains, dirt, and shadowy deserted corners where you can go off and dig a hole for yourself and no one will ever notice.

Parks and Recreation Areas

At parks you can Stake a Claim as described in the preceding chapter, and thus set up a one-way transaction.

Parks also offer the usual assortment of "woodsy" hiding places. You can hide stuff in a hollow tree or under some bushes. Stash something in the coals of a barbecue, in the splinters of a fallen log, or under a rock. The possibilities are endless.

Photo 80
A walk through any natural area will provide hundreds of useful hiding places.

Children's day camps also offer the same kind of hiding places in the form of woods, playgrounds, sheds, etc., but it may be hazardous to walk around such a camp, especially with society today being so scared of pedophiles and sex maniacs.

Playgrounds

Like the golf course, playgrounds are easy places to bury objects, under the sand or woodchips, or whatever is covering the ground. In tire playgrounds (those made of old recycled car tires) you can dig under tires which are half-submerged in the earth, to create a hiding spot that's very hard to find, but easy to locate when you know where it is.

Sports Stadiums

Sports stadiums are best for brush contacts and quick one-way or two-way transactions, because the stadium is cleaned after each game. For instance, you can do a one-way transaction by placing the item under a seat, just as in the movie theater discussed earlier. I've used the Lost and Found to my advantage, but there was so much hustle and bustle that information desks were not too anxious to hold onto my bag for me. There is a lot of garbage laying around, and it's very easy to leave a pizza box or soda cup laying around with something in it, so miniatura is another good bet. Just make sure the other person can distinguish your garbage from everybody else's!

Supermarkets

If you need to hide something for only a little while, perhaps to enact an exchange transaction with another person, you can use the "shopping-cart exchange" approach. In this approach, a package is hidden at the bottom of a shopping cart full of food. Leave the shopping cart in a predetermined place in the store, then exit. The other person can come in and collect the cart. A two-way anonymous transaction can also be conducted if one person leaves their cart at one end of the store, and the other person leaves one at the other end.

Train and Bus Depots

Used perhaps too often in detective movies and "mad bomber" movies, the train station or bus station are smart public locales in which to hide objects. What first comes to mind are the storage lockers, which have several advantages: they can be used for long periods of time, are very safe, and if a one-way or two-way transaction is required, they can be used to store a large object while the transfer of the smaller key is made via another method.

Some train and bus depots offer a red-cap service which you may make use of for short-term caching, and perhaps even a one-way or two-way exchange of goods. "Red caps" are porters who will look after your baggage for you for awhile. At some stations you can dial a number on a help phone, or press a button on a wall, to order up a red cap. Otherwise, you can ask at an information desk for details about the red cap service at your particular depot.

Video Stores

Some video stores have shelving that affords some hiding room underneath. Here are some video shelves that are perfect for hiding. Just look at the shelves in Photo 81 — they look solid and impenetrable. However, a slight lift allows a rack to come off. Underneath these shelves is plenty of room to hide something of a fairly large size.

Another idea is to hide stuff inside the videotape display boxes. In a video store, find a boring, stupid videotape that no one will ever watch (especially a videotape that is on the bottom shelf) and hide stuff inside it. A friend of mine who worked in a video store gave me everything I needed to make my own "video-store-quality display box," which was a clear plastic covering and a purple sticker that that particular video store puts on its display boxes. I was able to bring in my own display box (with a note and some candy inside) and leave it on a shelf for many months. Last time I looked, it was still there undisturbed.

Photo 81
This video shelving demonstrates the Diagonal Rule — wherever you see something slanting on a diagonal, there is probably hollow space behind it. Indeed, it is possible to dislodge one or two of the shelves to reveal a large area inside.

Waiting Rooms

The waiting rooms of dentists and doctors and even beauty parlors do not immediately spring to mind as good public hiding places, but I beg to differ with that assumption!

Hide something amongst all those magazines which are at the bottom of the magazine rack. There may be the infamous potted plants or even a whole floral display that you can use. Some waiting rooms have perennially closed blinds with a window ledge behind that you can put something on for a little while. There are plenty of hiding-spot opportunities. However, you would only really be able to use a waiting room under special circumstances, such as if you wanted to transmit something to another person who was visiting the office later that day. For casual hiding, it's too much

trouble to set up doctor appointments when there are plenty of other public places in the world to turn to.

Another opportunity to hide can be found in the hem of curtains. A doctor's waiting room is probably pretty fancy, but if you go to wait at a governmental office, such as the DMV or a hospital waiting room, you're more likely to find thick, ugly curtains made from a burlap-like material, with large hems at the bottom that make perfect receptacles. Other publicly accessible buildings such as classrooms have similar curtains.

Waiting rooms also usually have a closet or row of pegs to hang coats on. In fact, come to think of it, in my dentist's office you don't even have to walk into the office to hang your coat. There is a small closet between the outer door and the door to the waiting room. Thus, anyone can use that closet for public hiding, and not even the pesky receptionists or dental hygienists will see them using it.

Warehouse Stores

Warehouse stores are excellent for hiding stuff in. You'll find niches behind and between the stacks of cartons, and cracks in the wood racks used by forklifts to lift stacks of boxes.

Some supermarkets now have a "warehouse" section too. What they've done is open up part of their storage space in back in response to the phenomenal success of the chain warehouse stores like Sam's Club and B.J.'s. These supermarket warehouse sections are likely to be less well-staffed and less well-patrolled than a real warehouse store, so they offer better hiding places.

It's a Big World After All!

Naturally, there are lots more places than were listed here. There are pet stores, drug stores, lumber yards, florists, toy stores; the list goes on and on. The world is full of places, and opportunities to

hide stuff abound in those public places. Be like one of those Russian spies, looking at the world around you with new eyes, the eyes of someone searching for *duboks*, dead drops, public places in which objects can be concealed, and you will never find yourself short of a public place to hide stuff in.

Chapter Ten: Relaying Messages

One-way transactions and two-way transactions require communication between you and the other party. A plan must be formalized. The drop-off spot and pick-up spot must be relayed. If the entire transaction is to remain anonymous, great care must be taken to hide one's true identity.

Another reason for relaying messages is that if you are doing one-way or two-way transactions, you must sometimes let your partner know that it is time for him to pick up the goods. Former Soviet spy Vladimir Kuzichkin, in his revealing account of the KGB, wrote about the use of visual signals to inform other agents of the status of a dead drop:

> On the day of the operation, once he had checked for surveillance, the illegal would go to the location and place a container with the information in the dead-letter box. Anything could be used as a container. The main thing was that it should not attract attention in itself. 'Konrad' *[a secret agent]* preferred to use empty crushed toothpaste tubes. After he had put the container in the dead letter-box, the illegal would leave the area and put in a pre-arranged position a visible signal indicating that the box had been 'filled.' When we had received this signal, we collected the container, then put in place our own signal indicating to the illegal that the container had been collected. Once he had received our signal, the illegal went back home, and we returned to the embassy (Kuzichkin, 214).

In a sense, such communication is an extension of hiding things in public places, for to anonymously communicate you must put a piece of yourself — body, voice, thoughts or words — into public, while hiding your identity. If you are using public hiding places to send messages back and forth, be careful of the words used and the plans you organize. For instance, you should not leave a message that says, "We're going to kill the President. Please reply if you'll be there." There are two things wrong with this. First, obviously it's much too blatantly incriminating. Secondly, the message should inform the reader to reply in *either* case, not just if he will be there. That way there will be no misunderstandings if the message is intercepted, lost or stolen.

Classified Ads

Newspaper classified ads can be used to exchange anonymous communication. In 1932, when the Charles Lindbergh baby was kidnapped, communication between Lindbergh and the kidnappers was done through classified ads, as well as through public hiding spots (Fisher, Chapter 5-6). What I find most fascinating is that anyone can go to the library and find these editions of the newspapers, and see the actual messages placed by Lindbergh and his associates. The kidnappers asked that Lindbergh scrape together $50,000 if he ever wanted to see his baby alive again. He was to place an ad in the *New York American* newspaper. The ad read simply "Money is ready. — Jafsie." (Jafsie was a made-up name that was used to protect the identity of the person who placed the ad, a Dr. John F. Condon.) In fact, the money was not ready, but the men wanted to do what they could to ensure the baby's safety.

The kidnappers replied by sending a note which directed Condon to a public hiding spot. He was to drive to an empty hotdog stand with a wide open porch around it. He was to move aside a stone on the porch, and there he would find a message hidden underneath. This he did. The message gave him directions to a cemetery, where

he would be able to meet the kidnappers and hand over the ransom money. Condon explained the monetary situation, and they agreed to continue with the newspaper ads as a medium of message exchange. After some more back-and-forths, Condon was directed to a nursery, where he was to look under a table, lift a stone, and find a note hidden. He did this, and once again was confronted with a note telling him where to meet the kidnapper, to hand over the money. He followed the note. The money was handed over, and Lindbergh was given a message that directed him to a boat near Elizabeth Island.

What followed was a prolonged and agonizing series of communications between Lindbergh and the kidnappers. The boat, if it existed, was nowhere to be found. Lindbergh ran an ad in the *Bronx Home News* for 15 days pleading, "What is wrong? Have you crossed me? Please, better directions. Jafsie." The kidnappers continually reassured him that the baby was fine. The air was heavy with rumors and tensions. In the end, the Lindberghs did not get their baby back alive. The kidnappers had killed the boy shortly after removing him from the Lindbergh home. The whole exchange had been a cruel and costly hoax.

Anonymous E-mail

The Internet offers many options for anonymous communication. An e-mail address can be gotten in any name you choose. An e-mail address has the advantage that it does not indicate that you are from a particular geographic region, nor does it tie you down to one place on Earth. E-mail addresses can be further anonymitized by using special remailing services available on the Internet. Internet remailers work just about the same as their snail-mail counterparts. An Internet denizen must first devote his or her computer (or an account on their computer) to being an anonymous remailer. Now, one can send a private e-mail to this computer. It strips away your name, e-mail address, computer, and any other identifying in-

formation about one that is part of the e-mail header. It then mails out one's now-anonymous letter to its true destination. If the correspondent wants to respond, he or she must send their reply to the remailer computer, which will forward their response to the recipient. Usually, in the process, the correspondent's e-mail also becomes anonymous. For full information on providers of Internet anonymity, go to the **alt.answers** forum on USENET and you will undoubtly find an article on the subject. If not there, nose around on the **alt.privacy** forum for updated information.

Mail Drops and Rented Boxes

A more "real world" way to transmit messages (and packages) anonymously is through mail drops or rented mailboxes. The post office usually requires you to present identification upon renting a box, but certain businesses may not be so uptight about it. For instance, the franchise Mail Boxes Etc. and other operations like it will rent you a mailbox at one of their offices. They generally provide 24-hour access to the boxes, as well as a legitimate-looking street address. Another bonus is that these places will receive packages from UPS, Federal Express, DHL, and the like. Some of these companies, such as American Express, also offer mail-drop or mail-forwarding services. Call such operations for a brochure explaining the details of how it works. Going through a well-known, legit company my be a more preferable way of obtaining a maildrop than by ordering one from the back of a seedy magazine.

Finally, I would like to mention that there will be times when no matter how much you planned and connived; no matter how anonymously and secretly you acted; your weasely ways will become undone. Hidden caches will become uncovered. It is for these instances that having a rented mailbox or drop can come into play. Inside your stash of hidden stuff you can put a note (similar to the Concealment Project letter) that says, "If found, return to P.O. Box... for $500 reward." You hope and pray that your stash will

never be found, but if it is, at least you can be somewhat certain that your stuff will be returned to you in good condition. Of course, you don't have to pay up, since the mailbox was rented with cash only and the finder has no way to trace you or track you down.

Public Markers

We've all put something away in a drawer or closet and later forgotten exactly where it went. Earlier today I "misplaced" my car in a parking lot. A hiding spot is useless if the concealed contents are hidden so well they can never be found again. Public markers (or surface markers) are the way one identifies where a hiding spot is located. Public markers are visible yet inconspicuous reminders to ourselves where an object has been hidden, and perhaps that it has been hidden in the first place. For instance, the pink elephant hanging from my rear view mirror is a surface marker that helps me find my car in a crowded parking lot.

This is an intriguingly oxymoronic concept. You are announcing the fact that you have hidden something, and furthermore, the announcement offers some clue as to where that hidden item is.

In a one-way or two-way transaction with another person you almost always need a marker to indicate to the other person where the item is hidden or buried. Imagine the situation the poor fellow is in who's expected to find the hidden package in one of the mail trucks in Photo 17. In this case you would want to note the license plate number of the vehicle, as well as the location of the parking space. Of course, the parking space could change, but the license plate would not.

Sometimes you can make your own marker by putting some distinctive graffiti nearby with a marker or paint. I've taken a piece of string or wire and tied it in a knot around a pipe or tree close to where I had hidden something.

If you can't risk leaving your mark behind, you will have to rely on the markers that are naturally close to your hiding spot. One

solution is to make like a surveyor and locate your hiding spot in the center of the X between trees, bushes, doorways, or whatever objects are in the immediate area. You can also use distant objects such as mountains, water towers, telephone poles, or trees to center your hiding spot, although you'll have to be sure that your perception of "in between the two water towers" is the same as that of the other person who's going to come by later to pick up the stuff.

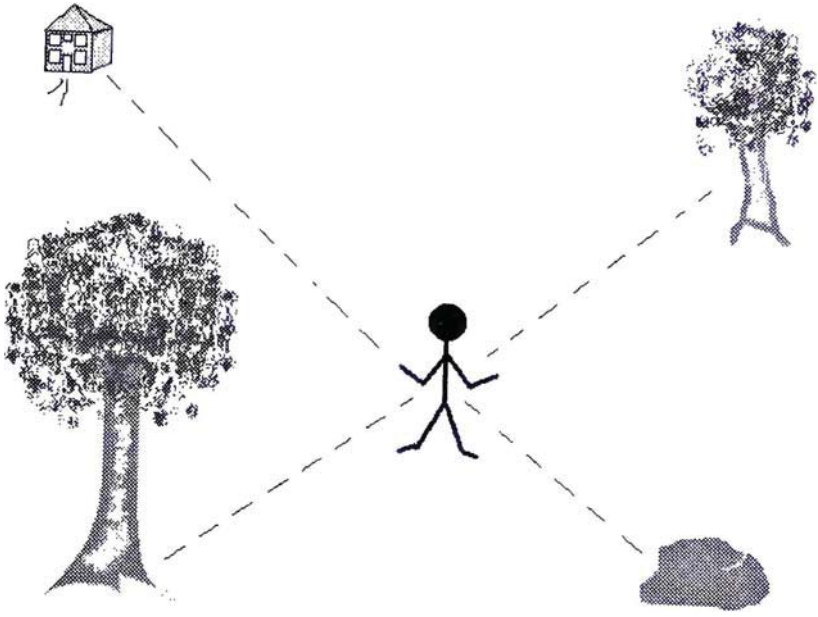


Figure 14
Using distant landmarks to locate a local position.

Chapter Eleven:
Some Safety Rules

Not Getting Caught

The problem with public hiding is that other people are often there when you hide your stuff! Because of that, you will often have to seek out the most private spots of the public areas you wish to use.

When you are setting up the cache, that is a very vulnerable time. After all, it may be the one time when your "anonymous hiding" can be traced back to you. If you are hiding something near a street, be very careful because there are lots of windows around through which people could be watching. Look out for people sitting in parked cars along the side of the road. It's often very difficult to see through the glare of a car window, especially if it's tinted glass. Also watch for people looking out the windows of houses, storefronts and apartments. Onlookers are most likely innocent bystanders who couldn't care less about what you're doing, but on the other hand, if they see you poking around they may conduct their own investigation after you're gone, or they might call the police.

Another trap to avoid is hiding yourself but not hiding your car. Experienced burglars use the technique of parking a few blocks away from the house they intend to enter. They will walk the distance to the house so that no connection can be made between

their parked car and the burglarized home. If they have to park in a suburban district, they will park their car on the border between two houses. That way, if either homeowner looks out at the street, they will think that the car belongs to a guest of their next-door neighbor.

Choose Your Weather

For extra safety you'll find it to your best advantage to hide stuff during a light rain. No one else will be out and about to see you, and if they are out, they're probably running for cover. Having an umbrella with you also serves to hide your face from onlookers.

You always want to be aware of the tracks you leave behind, especially in foul weather when footprints are more likely to appear in mud, water, slush or snow. Evaluate your situation and decide if it's worthwhile to obscure your tracks or to create sets of false footprints in the mud or snow to throw others off the trail of your cache.

Going out to hide at night may be advantageous. Certainly the cloak of darkness helps to conceal your presence in the neighbor's bushes, but if someone does hear a sound or notice your presence they are more likely to get suspicious. "What the *hell* are you doing walking around there in the middle of the night!?"

Dead Zones

As we've seen, the various Soviet espionage groups have been very big on public hiding places, making frequent use of dead letter drops to relay messages, one-time code pads, and photographic film. It seems appropriate then to turn to them for guidance. A former KGB major, Vladimir Kuzichkin, described in his memoirs the methods he and his comrades used in his former spyworld to avoid discovery:

> Anything you choose can serve as a location for a dead letter box — a hollow in a brick wall, a space between a pole and a wall, or behind a drainpipe, and so on. The basic requirement is to find a place which is

> not overlooked from anywhere within what is known as the 'dead zone'. The idea is that at the precise moment when the dead letter-box is being cleared or filled, the intelligence officer doing so should disappear from the field of vision. Even if he is under observation, the surveillance must not observe that very instant of the operation. In illegal intelligence work, a site is used only once, after which nobody returns to it again. For that reason finding new locations was a continual task for us (Kuzichkin, 213).

If your working space is limited and you simply must return to a previous hiding spot many times, at least try to pick that spot carefully in the first place. The cache should definitely be in a dead zone (unobservable), and should ideally be nowhere near anyplace you are known to frequent. If you usually hang out at Hooter's Bar, then your cache would be better off if it were near a neighborhood church.

Another spy, this one from the GRU, pointed out that he was trained to find sites for public hiding spots away from prisons, railway stations, military factories, and near government facilities, because in all of those places there are heightened police and security precautions (Suvorov, 105).

What should you do if someone sneaks up behind you while you're in the midst of tucking away a parcel in an out-of-sight spot? That's the next topic of discussion.

Getting Caught

Always be prepared to get caught. Naturally, you should do everything in the world to prevent getting caught, but you should also take certain steps so that you can recover quickly in the event that somebody spots you or questions why you're poking around there.

When I was a kid, I'd carry a tennis ball with me. If I was caught trespassing I would pull it out and explain that I'd accidentally thrown it behind these bushes or into that alley, or wherever I was at the time. Here is a list of some suggestions you might want to

use when someone comes up to you and says, "Hey buddy! What're you doing there?"

- "Just taking a piss." (Act embarrassed and zip up your fly.) Don't use this one with cops, as they can arrest you for public urination, or they might start inquiring about your drunkenness.
- "I thought I saw a yellow-throated tree thrush!" (Act excited.) "Did you *see* it? It was beautiful! *Nature* is beautiful." (Act like a total nature freak.)
- "Just taking photos." Have a camera with you. Start talking artsy, analyzing the lines, curves, and composition of the architecture. Of course you don't want to use this one if you're passing through the Pentagon's backyard.
- "I was bicycling through this area before and I dropped my key somewhere. You see a key lying around anywhere?" I used this one today when an automobile drove up out of nowhere and the driver demanded to know what I was doing on his construction site.
- "*Oh!* Is this area for employees only? I'm sorry, someone said there was a restroom back here."

The following two are useful when you're somewhere out in the middle of nowhere, and it's nighttime, and your car is parked beside you, and a cop pulls over and asks what you're doing standing there in the middle of that empty field with the cache in your hands.

- Say that you were getting sleepy driving such a long distance at night. Explain that you pulled over to take a walk around until you felt more refreshed, and could drive more safely. Play up the safety angle.
- You can also say that your car broke down and you're waiting for AAA to come by with the tow truck. If there's no telephone nearby (on which you could have possibly made this fictitious phone call) tell the cop that a passing motorist let you use his cellular phone to make the call.

Preparing Hidden Objects for Discovery

No matter how well-hidden a cache, you must always think about the slim chance of discovery. Look at the objects you're hiding and ask yourself, "What would happen if someone found this? Could it be traced back to me? How?" You want to do everything you can to make your cache uninteresting, untraceable, and anonymous.

When spies want to make paper documents more anonymous, they will hide photocopies instead of the originals. Photocopies take the documents "one step away from the original," thus offering less information about the person(s) who created the documents. Fingerprints are eliminated. Indentations from other writing on top of the original paper are gone. Indentations from erasures also vanish in a photocopy. If the original paper was unique in some way, made of special fibers or of high quality, those traceable clues will be lost to the mass-produced and cheap paper filler of the copy machine (Allen, 225).

If the documents must be hand-written, there is the possibility that a handwriting expert would be able to identify the writing as your own. Use all of these tricks and you'll fake out the handwriting analyst:

- Write with your opposite hand.
- Analyze your normal handwriting and try to write opposite from the way you usually write. For example: Do you normally write the letter C from top-to-bottom? Then write it from bottom-to-top. Write all your letters the reverse of your normal handwriting.
- Most importantly of all, use very basic and unornamented BLOCK LETTERING. WRITING IN THIS WAY MAKES IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR AN EXPERT TO TRACE YOUR NORMAL HANDWRITING (Allen, 225).

Taking these sorts of precautionary steps is known as "sterilizing" the cache. Be sure you sterilize your caches whenever possible.

Hiding Keys

If you must hide a key, hide many keys with it. Take some old spare keys that don't fit into anything (everyone has some of these around the house), and put them all on a key ring with the one key you truly intend to hide. If someone actually does find the keys, they won't know which one is important. Or they will go on a wild goose chase trying to fit outdated keys into imaginary locks.

You should also attach a misleading key chain to the keys, or better yet, make up individual key chains for each key you hide. The key chains should each have a tag on them that describes what the respective keys are used for. For instance, if you hide the key to your summer home in Piddling Springs, Maryland, then the key tag should say, "File Cabinet, 342 Avenue, Chicago." That oughta throw 'em off the track.

Other Threats

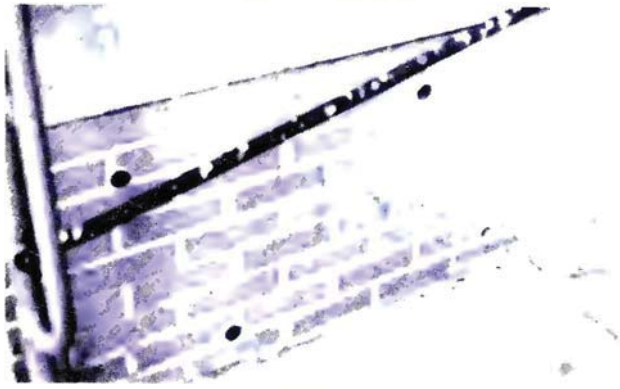


Photo 82

These little holes could mean a big problem for you if you leave stuff hidden in there when it rains, for these are pipes used to drain water from the building's roof.

It is worthwhile to mention that there are other threats to your hiding spots than mere discovery. A hole in a wall may seem to be the perfect spot to stuff in the pearl necklace you've just stolen, but you might come back the next day to find it has washed away: that convenient hole was really a drainage pipe for rainwater.

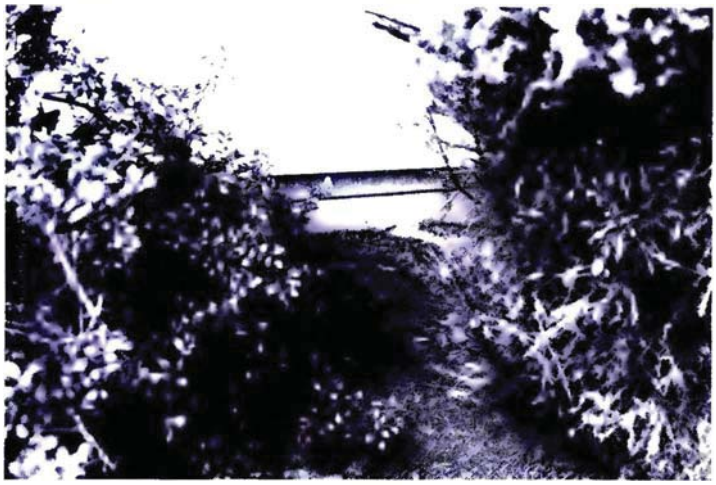


Photo 83
Another good hiding spot that turns bad in a rainstorm: a drainage pipe extending from somebody's basement.

Here in Photo 84 is what at first glance looks like a wonderful hiding spot — a literal hole in the side of a brick building. But it is a rather poor hiding spot when you take a look at the broader area. This building, and the surrounding ones, are actually under renovation. I would be afraid to use this spot over a long period of time, because whatever I hid in it might very well be holed up inside the wall forever by some bricklayer! One Soviet double agent told American spies that he had been using a hole in a flight of steps in Prospect Park (New York City) as a reliable and safe *dubok*.[1] Only

[1] *Dubok* is the KGB and GRU term for dead drop.

he had to discontinue use of the hole when park workers found the crevice and filled it in with cement (Deacon, 400).

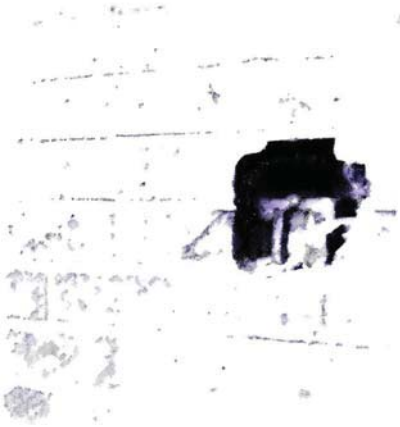


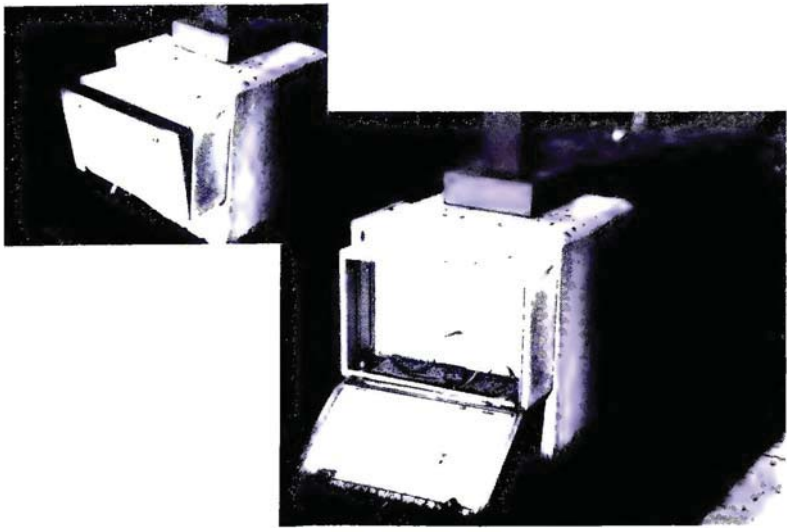
Photo 84

Photo 85

When cement or concrete meets plantlife, there is usually a gaping hole. This staircase in a park is no exception.

Some hiding spots are really very good to hide things in, but you simply can't use them. For instance, as you're driving along a highway or turnpike, there are plenty of grassy areas alongside the road, or sometimes in the center divider, which are perfect hiding spots because no one ever goes there, certainly not to dig and poke around in the ground. Cars fly past every day, but no one pays any particular attention to these waysides which don't have any special features about them to be noticed. The seemingly perfect hiding spot, never traveled, always ignored. But it is not the perfect hiding spot, because it is impossible to have your privacy by the side of a highway, or on a center divider. In fact, you're liable to get cops pulling over to see what's wrong with your car if you stop on a highway.

There are other examples of good/bad hiding spots. For instance certain street lamps have a metal box base used to enclose wiring. A nice spot — but it's right under a light! No privacy, no good.



Photos 86 & 87
An empty box at the base of a lamp in a parking lot.

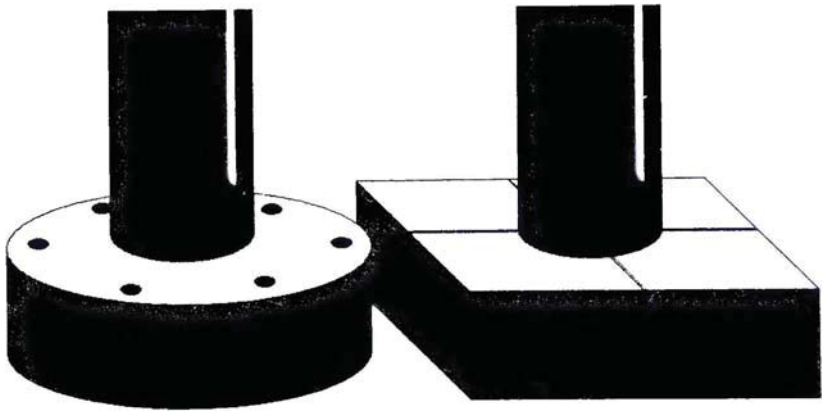


Figure 15

These two styles of lamp bases often appear to be bolted down or screwed in place, but looks can be deceiving. Very often you can lift up the box or sections of the box to reveal a hiding spot. Once again it is important to keep in mind that such a hiding spot is directly underneath a light source, so be wary!

So keep this in mind as you're scouting out dead drops or hiding stuff away — some of the best places to put things are not necessarily the best places to hide them.

Finally, I'd like to point out that in stores you should almost never hide anything that could be bought in that store, or else they'll think you're stealing if they catch you. If they don't catch you, they might still find your stuff and think it's theirs and reshelve it.

Battling the Elements

Many of the hiding techniques throughout this book have been tested in more than one locale to ensure their safety. Safety means not just that they won't be discovered by others. When you're hiding outdoors, it also entails protecting against the natural elements. While researching, The Concealment Project underwent a temporary setback; a succession of devastating ice storms which led to weeks on end of freezing temperatures, frozen ground, and inches of ice, slush and snow. Many items made it through without a complaint. However, the next time you or I may not be so lucky. Electronics equipment can suffer severe damage from intense cold or heat (or wetness for that matter). Metals can rust. Water levels can rise unexpectedly. Magnetic media such as computer disks and audiocassettes and even video cassettes will melt in hot weather. Your worst enemy may very well be Mother Nature!

For these reasons you have to choose a storage container wisely. Regular cardboard boxes are bad because they aren't impervious to rain. Milk and juice cartons or jugs are a better bet because they were formerly used to contain liquid. Hiding stuff in a glass jar may be even better.

A plastic bag[2] sealed tight with tape will keep out wetness, but if there was any moisture in the air inside the bag, it could condense in cold weather and you'll end up with a sealed bag of water droplets soaking into your precious cache. Libraries sometimes have this problem with outside book drops. I've seen compact discs that had been deposited into a book drop one night, then retrieved the next morning by library staff. The CDs were soaking wet, literally drenched with water that had condensed overnight on the cold surface of the CD and jewel cases. Once water had

[2] The plastic bag from inside a cereal box is a good bag to use, because it's stronger than a bread bag or vegetable bag from the grocery store. Turn any of these bags inside-out so your stuff doesn't get covered in bread crumbs or left-over cereal flakes.

accumulated it would run off, allowing more water to condense on the cold plastic cases. This was not damaging to the CDs themselves, but it did damage to the accompanying CD booklets and the other books in the drop.

One anecdote that illustrates the need to be aware of the elements was told by John Hoffman, the maestro of Dumpster diving and author of *The Art and Science of Dumpster Diving.* Hoffman relates how, during his first solo experience, he had fished out a full carton of books from the Dumpster of a bookstore, but there was no way to pedal home on his ten-speed with the heavy box. Hoffman needed a public hiding place! His first stop was an abandoned building nearby. To his dismay, workmen were milling around the place, fixing the roof. The only other place he could find was a cement culvert nearby. (A culvert is a drainage channel that crosses under a road.) He made sure no one was around to see him, and then darted into the culvert, propped up the box on a plastic milk carton, and rode home. The milk carton was Hoffman's way of battling the elements. There was some stagnant water on the floor of the culvert, and as his father later taught him, "elevating the box would be a good idea even if the bottom of the culvert was dry. If it rained and water ran through the culvert, my loot would still be reasonably dry — as long as it wasn't enough water to sweep it away" (Hoffman, 56).

Poisonous Plants

Whenever you are digging around in forested areas, be on the lookout for poison ivy, poison oak, prickles, and other hazards.

Poison ivy is not necessarily reddish in color as many people believe. It is often a shiny green (which may or may not have a red tinge to it). The leaves have a smooth edge, and grow in clusters of three on vine-like stems that are rusty brown in color. Poison ivy has small whitish-green flowers or berries depending on the time of year.

Poison oak is somewhat similar to poison ivy, although it is more shrubby than vine-like, and can climb trees. Poison-oak leaves also grow in threes, but the leaves often look toothed, as though they've had small triangles cut out of their sides. The leaves are more leathery-looking, and have a dark top and lighter underside. The leaves turn dark red in autumn before dropping off. Poison oak also has whitish berries.

The main way to identify poison ivy and oak is the cluster-of-three rule. If you see anything that remotely looks like this, stay clear of it. (On the other hand, if you have good reason to believe that someone else will be looking for your cache, it might be fun to hide a dummy box in a meadow of poison ivy!)

A third plant to be careful of is poison sumac. Poison sumac is less common than the other dangerous plants, but its poison is more harmful and easier to incur. The poisonous variety of sumac grows in wet, swampy places, or nearby lakes and streams, and is found mostly in the Eastern United States. Poison sumac will look like a small tree or shrub. The leaves are smooth-edged, and they sprout out of the stems as matched pairs. The berries are greenish-white, and hang down in loose bunches.[3]

Both poison ivy and poison oak contain less "poison" on cool, moist days in early spring or late autumn, but that's no reason to be less cautious. When you've returned from the woods, keep your hands away from your face (and other body parts) until you can wash up. Always wash your entire body, checking skin, hair and clothes carefully for ticks and other icky things. You'd be surprised at what creeps into your shorts!

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[3] The non-poisonous varieties of sumac are much more common. These harmless sumacs have saw-toothed leaves; and they have maroon berries that grow in tight, upright clusters.

Handling a Brush Contact

The brush contact has been mentioned a few times throughout this book. The brush contact is a way of doing a one-way or two-way transaction that involves both parties being present at the same location at the same time at the same place. For instance, an exchange of shopping carts in a supermarket, or the exchange of two suitcases in a crowded airport, are examples of brush contacts.

Such contacts are suitable only if you know and trust the other party. The reason for the subtle, brief encounter is if you suspect that either you or the other person is being watched, and you don't want to tip off that the two of you know each other. On the other hand, the brush contact is frowned upon if your main interest is in protecting your identity, because your anonymity is at great risk in such a situation. If anonymity is a consideration, you should consider not doing a brush contact. Instead, use a one-way or two-way transaction in which you will have full control over the proceedings. For two-way transactions, it's best to instruct the other party to first drop off their stuff at a particular location — one that's far away from where your half of the bargain is buried.

On the way to the site you'll want to "dry-clean" yourself. That is, take steps to ensure you're not being followed. We all know enough to take a twisting, curving path so as to detect and possibly mislead any followers. If you're going by foot, you should have some changes of clothing with you. By alternatively putting on or taking off a hat, throwing a jacket over your shoulder, over an arm, or wearing it, you create a combination of looks. From far off, a follower will be looking for "the person with the cowboy hat," not "the person with the jacket over his arm (and the hat hidden underneath)." Simple changes make a big difference from halfway down the street.

The primary way to ensure safety at the brush contact site itself is to not contact the other party until the very last minute. Otherwise, you give them the opportunity to stake out the place

beforehand and observe you. Your best bet is to arrive at the site yourself, and then call the other party. The location will be a surprise, and they won't have any way of trailing you or knowing who you are amongst all the people in the place. You might also want to wear a disguise of some kind.

Some brush contacts will allow you the freedom to not be very specific when you contact the other party. That way, once they get to the place they'll be unsure as to when and where the exchange will occur, and you'll have the upper hand. For instance, one way to set up a two-way exchange would be to instruct the person to drop off his package in the dairy section of the supermarket, and then to pick up your package in the vegetables at the other end. Of course, you never go to the vegetables at all. Instead, you replace his package in the dairy section with your own. When he realizes he's empty-handed, he'll come back to retrieve his package, and see yours there, waiting for him.

Finally, I think it's important to mention that if you're ever in a situation where you're asked to be on the giving end of a one-way or two-way transaction, try to put yourself in charge of the situation. By deciding when and how the exchange will take place, you can set up the exchange so as to make it safest for yourself, while finding out information about the other person. If you want the most opportunity to investigate the other person, use a key-exchange technique such as a storage locker or mini-storage facility. That will give you two opportunities to look at and tail the other party: first, when they pick up the key; and second, when they go to the locker. Naturally, if you're the one in that position, you must be on your toes at both points of the transaction.

How to Remember Where You Put Something

No matter how good your memory is, it is very often true that "Out of sight, out of mind." Once it is hidden, it ceases to exist in

your life, and therefore it becomes less and less a part of your daily thoughts. You will tend to forget the things you have hidden away.

Therefore, if you want to remember where you hide something, the first step is to remember that you hid something in the first place. When you're hiding something, make a conscious effort to remember where you are hiding it. So often we act without thinking, putting down a pen or the TV remote control, only to find it two days later in the meat keeper in the refrigerator. It's so easy, especially if we are going to be hiding a lot of different things in a lot of different places, to forget exactly where, and exactly what, has been hidden. A conscious effort to remember is the first key step in the memory process. As you are in the act of hiding an article, mentally tell yourself exactly what you're doing. *"Okay, I'm hiding the 12-year-old-scotch in the bottom of the tool barrel in my neighbor's storage shed. I've got to remember that."* Even if you end up forgetting, you will still almost certainly remember the fact that you hid something... somewhere.

The second action you must take while hiding an object is to really take a good look at the hiding place. Of course, if you are placing a bottle of scotch in a barrel, your eyes will be pointed towards the barrel; but are you really *looking* at it? Consciously take in every detail of the barrel, as if you were trying to memorize its appearance in order to paint a portrait of it later. Think to yourself, *"This is what the hiding spot looks like."* During the course of a day your eyes probably glance at millions of objects. By consciously informing your brain that this is the hiding spot, you are making sure it will pay closer attention to this object out of all those millions.

The third action that will ensure you can find the hiding spot again is to "look back" at the hiding spot. After the items are hidden away and you are starting to walk away from the site, turn around and look back at the hiding spot. Pretend it is two months later and you are approaching the spot to claim your goods. Realize that this is what the place will look like when you return. You

might want to look at the hiding spot from ten feet away, then twenty feet, thirty feet, etc. If the place is safe and private enough, you might want to walk away completely from it, then walk back to the hiding spot. That way you will save in your memory the experience of coming to your hiding place. These techniques have a dual purpose: they further ensure the hiding spot will be remembered, and they also ensure that anyone else approaching the hiding spot can not see the objects you've hidden therein.

A coded "memory-jogger" might be what you need. A note to yourself, written in a code that only you will understand, explaining where the object is buried. At first this sounds like a fun idea, but I'll tell you something: if you make yourself a cheat sheet to help you remember where you've hidden stuff, you'd better make it a good one. Too obvious, and whoever else finds the sheet will know immediately where your cache is located. Too obscure, and you will forget the meaning of your coded phrases. Imagine trying to retrieve something you hid three years ago, and the only clue you have to work with is a scrap of paper with some coded scribbles that you can barely read, let alone figure out what the code is. Believe me, I've done that plenty of times, so I know.

The problem of forgetting where we have hidden objects is so commonplace, so very human, that it has been studied by cognitive psychologists at Emory University in Georgia. The series of experiments, written up in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, aimed to resolve why it is that so often "we are our own mnemonic enemy" (Winograd, 366). The investigators discovered that the more unlikely a hiding place, the more difficult it is to remember that place. Most people choose a hiding spot specifically for the spot's unlikeliness. However, the researchers speculated that the very unlikeliness of the hiding spot leads to our downfall. We labor under the assumption that "distinctiveness increases memorability." In other words, the weirder something is, the more likely it is that we will remember it. Therefore, we will supposedly remember a strange hiding spot better than a ho-hum hiding spot. (Hiding your

car keys in the toaster should be easier to remember than hiding them at the bottom of a desk drawer.) However, as the psychologists point out in their study, when we are hiding an object "it is possible to be seduced by the distinctiveness of the light fixture or toilet tank, but later, in fact, the task will not be to recognize the light fixture, but to access it to the cue *car keys*." Sure, it's easy to remember an unusual thing, but when you're trying to remember where you put your car keys, you're thinking about the keys, not about the toilet tank, or whatever unusual hiding spot you chose. Or, as they say: "In real life... the object is the retrieval cue." (Winograd, 371).

The object is what we know about even when its hiding spot has been forgotten. To remember the hiding spot we have to somehow generate the memory of it. Memory expert Kevin Trudeau recommends that when we are trying to remember something like a hiding place, we should try to recall everything we can about the circumstances of the event. Ask yourself questions like these:

- What was I hiding?
- Why did I want to hide it?
- What general location did I hide it in?
- What clothing was I wearing that day?
- What was the weather like?
- How did I feel that day?
- Did I enjoy hiding it, or was it difficult or frustrating?
- Did I have to crouch down or step up to hide it?
- etc, etc, etc...

Continue in this vein, rapidly asking yourself every possible question you can about the events surrounding the hiding of the missing object, your state of mind when you were hiding the object, and the state of your surroundings at the time. Our mind has the tendency to form connections between memories. If you remember that it was frustrating to hide the object, the connection will be made that you hid it under some prickly bushes. Thinking leads to more thinking. Thinking leads to connections being made, streams

of memory being unplugged. That's one of the reasons I recommended consciously looking at your surroundings and thinking about the act of hiding when you are hiding stuff, because you will have more memories to draw upon later on.

Psychologists talk about a "generation-recognition strategy" for remembering hiding places. They suggest that you let your mind generate viable hiding spots, until you recognize one of those spots as the place where you actually did hide the object. The idea is that whatever your mind did a year ago when you hid it, it should be able to recreate, right now. If you're trying to find the camera which you hid, think, "Now what are some logical hiding places for that camera?" Your mind will start to generate ideas, and you will reject some as unusable, and accept others as possibilities. It's very likely that these are the same ideas you had a year ago when you hid the thing in the first place.

You should also think about what might have changed since you hid the object. Earlier I described how I accidentally lost my box of drill bits under the hidey log I was working on. By remembering the sequence of steps I went through, I realized that a change had been made to the workbench, that I had put something down on the workbench, and that that change might have something to do with why I couldn't find the drill bits.

Finally, it should be mentioned that no matter how creative you are, lots of people have probably had the same ideas that you've had. That's why when you're generating ideas for hiding places, even if they are seemingly novel spots where no one else would think of hiding stuff, it's likely that you're wrong — other people *have* thought of hiding stuff there, whether it be inside a shoe, in the freezer, the cookie jar, a tree stump, under the doormat, or wherever. Burglars have known to head straight for places like these when they enter someone's house, because they know that *everybody* thinks of the same exact "unusual" hiding places. The problem is, everyone has the same stuff in their homes, more or less, so we have the same hiding places from which to choose. The

most unusual hiding spot in my house is about the same as the most unusual hiding spot in your house. This demonstrates the need to think very carefully before you hide something in the first place.

The first clever hiding spot you think of is very likely the first clever hiding spot everyone else thinks of too. You might be better off doing one better. If you use the public hiding places in this book (as opposed to hiding stuff on your own property), then you fare better in certain respects. If someone's specifically targeting you for a search, they may know to look in your freezer for drugs, but they won't know to look in the bottom of the ice freezer at the corner 7-11. They may know to look in your address book under James Safe to find the combination to your wall safe (because that's another common hiding spot people use to hide safe combinations), but they won't know to go to the McDonalds and see where you wrote the combination as graffiti on the wall underneath the certificate from the Board of Health. They will have no clue that you hide things in public places. And don't you worry, your secret is safe with me.

Glossary

These are terms relating to hiding things in public places. Many of these words are used by spies and detectives as they go about their business of "playing games in the woods."

accommodation address — A mail drop, especially one used by a member of an intelligence agency.

anonymous hiding — The theory of concealment which allows an object to be hidden in such a way that if it is discovered, it can not be traced back to the one who hid it. Objects hidden in public places are often anonymous.

black cache — Spy lingo sometimes used to describe a **dead drop** which will be used over a long period of time. A black cache had better be **sterilized** and located in a **dead zone**.

brush contact — When two people make a quick exchange of items in a public place. For instance, two agents who "accidentally" exchange briefcases or luggage at a train station according to a pre-arranged plan. Used for **one-way** or **two-way transactions**.

cache — A hiding spot usually used by only one person, to hide personal possessions.

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city drop — A **dead drop** made in an urban area, such as in the public bathroom of a big city hotel or hospital.

concealment device — A **container** which has been designed to look innocent.

container — The box, bag, vial, etc. into which the secret item is placed before hiding it. The container is often doctored to look harmless or useless (such as an old cereal box).

country drop — A **dead drop** made in a rural region, such as in a field or forest, or alongside a dirt path.

culvert — A pipe or half-pipe, usually made of cement, that runs under a road to allow water drainage.

cutout — A person who acts as a go-between for two parties who, for security reasons, can not communicate directly with each other. Sometimes written as cut-out. (See chapter "Hiding Items with Innocent Bystanders" for examples.)

dead drop — A site used by spies for **one-way** or **two-way transactions**. Very often code books or surveillance film will be left in a dead drop for another spy to pick up. A dead drop is used so that the two spies will never meet face-to-face, and so they can not be linked together if they are under surveillance. This is especially important if one of the spies is a mole.

dead-letter box — Another term for a **dead drop**, used by the KGB. Sometimes shortened to DLB.

dead zone — In KGB parlance, a public place which a person can enter and be unobserved. A good spot to use for a **dead-letter box**.

disgust factor — The theory that a hiding spot is less likely to be discovered if it has a disgusting odor or appearance, because no one will want to nose around there.

drop — A **dead drop**.

dry-cleaning — Any precaution taken to detect or prevent surveillance. For example, as I'm walking to my hiding spot I should dry-clean myself to make sure I'm not being followed.

key exchange — When a key or lock combination is given to another party so that they can access a locked public hiding place, such as a storage locker or car trunk. Generally, the key itself is hidden in a public hiding place. Because there are more small hiding places than large ones, the small key can be concealed in a clever hiding spot.

kick — The indentation at the bottom of a glass bottle. Many objects other than bottles have kicks that can be used as storage spaces.

live-letter box — Another name for a **mail drop**. Sometimes shortened to LLB.

mail drop — An address used to receive letters, packages, or other communications, which are then either held for pickup, or sent on to a second party. This is done for purposes of anonymity.

miniatura — The litter and little things you see by the side of the road and strewn about in vacant lots. Normally ignored, miniatura make good **containers**.

moving drop — A **dead drop** made on a train, plane or other moving vehicle.

one-way transaction — Use of a hiding spot by two people in which one person hides an object, and the other person retrieves it. Used in "giving" situations, when a person needs to give something to someone but does not expect an object in return. Examples: ransoms, blackmails, subordinate spy giving found information to his or her superiors.

open code — This is an mundane-seeming message that actually conveys a coded communication. Example: "I wanted the jacket so I mailed my check to L.L. Bean." By prearrangement, L.L.Bean means a LLB (**Live-Letter Box**), and the jacket is actually a piece of evidence which is being exchanged in the LLB for money.

public marker — A visible reminder as to where a hidden object is located. Also called a **surface marker**.

punt — Another name for a **kick**, the indentation at the bottom of a glass bottle.

ready-for-action signal — Another name for a **signal**.

signal — A prearranged code that indicates that a **dead drop** has been filled or emptied. A signal might be visual or audial. Spies have variously used a 7-Up can, chalk marking, and orange peels strewn about to indicate that the **dead drop** is ready for action.

staking a claim — A method of doing **one-way** or **two-way transactions** in which you (the person hiding the object) sets up a public area in such a way that onlookers won't interfere with it. For instance, you might set out a picnic lunch on a picnic table, or set up a beach blanket at a park or beach. The object to be transferred is concealed in the layout (i.e., in a bottle of soda, or in a picnic basket). You then make anonymous contact with the other party, and instruct them as to where the bench or blanket or picnic table is, and where the object is hidden at that site. You are able to watch the spot from a safe vantage point while they claim the object, not knowing who you are.

sterilize — To remove any evidence that a particular person, agency or country is connected with some object, **cache** or device.

surface marker — Another name for a **public marker**, a visible reminder as to where a hidden object is located or buried.

two-way transaction — Use of a hiding spot by two people in which one person hides an object, the other person retrieves it, but the second person also leaves something for the first person to pick up later. Used in "exchange" or "buying" situations. For example, the purchasing of an illegal substance.

Appendix A: Where To Hide Things In Public Places

The following chart lists all of the hiding places discussed in this book. To help you find a hiding spot that best suits your needs, four separate categories are considered: Size, Preparation, Safety, and Transaction Types.

Size

The **Size** column on the chart below tells the size of items that can fit in the hiding spot. A small item is anything from a piece of jewelry or coin, to something the size of a knife or a small soft-cover book. A medium item is about the size of a woman's handbag or a basketball. A large item is anything larger than that; for instance a briefcase, suitcase or shopping bag.

Preparation

Preparation tells how much time and effort is involved in preparing the hiding spot. Some methods are impromptu and can be done on the spur of the moment. Others require special tools or supplies to accomplish, which makes preparation time longer.

Safety

The **Safety** column on the chart considers both the weather and chance of discovery. A hiding spot that is indoors will have a higher safety rating than one outdoors, simply because the one

outdoors is affected by the hot sun and the pouring rain. A hiding place in a high-traffic area will be less safe than one out in the middle of nowhere. Safety is measured on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being an extremely safe hiding spot, and 1 being pretty risky.

Transaction Types

Transaction Types refers to whether or not the hiding spot can be used for cache-type hides, one-way, or two-way transactions. Other features of the hiding spot will be noted, such as if the spot can be used for long-term storage. "Long-term cache" means the spot can be used continuously, virtually forever, without detection.

The notation "short-term cache" as it appears on the chart means that the hiding spot is good as a cache usually only for a day, or part of a day. Hiding spots that have a low **Safety** rating may be perfectly fine for a short-term cache of a few minutes or hours. Sometimes, you just have to get something off your hands for a little while, and it's perfectly all right to use whatever hiding space is available, even if it's not the best hiding place in the world. For example, one time I was moving a bunch of stuff down a few flights of steps in an apartment building. I had a little too much, and rather than carry it all with me, I stashed some of it away behind a nearby closed door. Or, if you have to leave a store for a few minutes to get some money, you might hide the items you want to buy.

A key exchange might also be mentioned. A key exchange is when the hiding spot relies on a key. In such instances, one-way or two-way transactions are possible only if you make the key available to the other party. Key exchanges allow you to store a large item while hiding the smaller key elsewhere for another person to pick up. Because the key is small, there are many more hiding-spot opportunities than there are for the large item stored in the main hiding spot.

Index of Hiding Places

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Airport baggage carousel	Any size.	Some preparation required.	5, if airport security is lax.	one-way, two-way
Alongside turnpike or highway	Any size, depending on the hiding spot.	None.	5, but make sure you and your car are not visible from the road.	cache, one-way, two-way, long-term
Ashtray	Small.	None.	2	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
ATM	Small and flat.	None.	5	short-term cache
Band-practice space	Any size.	Rent the space.	3 to 5	cache; one-way or two-way requires key exchange
Barbecue	Small.	None.	3 or 4	cache, one-way, two-way
Beach blanket	Small or medium, possibly larger.	Set up the blanket and contact the other party.	4 or 5.	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Bicycle	Small.	Some preparation required.	5	cache; one-way or two-way may require key exchange.
Bleachers (under)	Small or medium.	None.	2 to 4, depending on how clean the area is and time of year.	cache, one-way, two-way
Book store	Small.	None.	3 or 4, possibly more depending on the store.	cache, one-way, two-way
Briefcase exchange	Briefcase-sized.	Contact the other party.	5, but your anonymity is in jeopardy.	one-way or two-way brush contact exchange

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Bulletin board	Small and flat.	None.	3 to 5.	cache, one-way or two-way
Bumper of car	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Burying	Small or medium.	Burying can be time-costly.	4 or 5. Usually a good choice.	cache, one-way, two-way
Bushes/ shrubbery	Small or medium.	None.	2 to 5 depending on the spot.	cache, one-way, two-way
Car (inside or in trunk)	Almost any size, depending on the method used.	None or some, depending on method used.	5	long-term cache; one-way or two-way with a key exchange
Card catalog drawer	Small.	None or some, depending on method used.	2	cache, one-way, two-way
Cardboard display box	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Cemetery	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Clock (behind)	Small, flat.	Need tape, or other attachment method.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Coat check room	Any size.	None	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Coat on rack	Small or medium, to fit in pocket.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Columns	Small	Some preparation required. Might be noisy or time-consuming.	4 or 5	cache, one-way, two-way
Compost heap	Any size.	None.	2 or 3	cache, one-way, two-way
Construction site	Small or medium.	None.	2 to 4 depending on method used.	cache, one-way, two-way
Cubbyhole in store	Small or medium.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Culvert	Small or medium.	Some preparation to ensure against weather damage.	2 to 4, depending on the culvert used.	cache, one-way, two-way
Curtain hem	Small.	Just rip open the hem slightly.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Door (behind an open door)	Small or thin.	None.	2	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Door stop	Small.	Bore hole in the wedge and construct a lid or stopper to conceal the hole.	5, although there is always the unlikely possibility that the door stop will be taken or lost.	cache, one-way, two-way
Doormat	Small and flat.	None	1	cache, one-way, two-way
Dog collar	Small.	A little preparation, and a mean dog required.	5	cache
Dog doo (fake)	Small.	None.	2 or 3	cache, one-way, two-way
Drawer in store	Small or medium.	None.	3 to 5	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Dressing room	Small or medium; possibly larger.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Dumpster	Any size.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Fairground	Depends on hiding spot.	None.	Good safety, assuming the hiding is done off-season.	cache, one-way, two-way
Fast-food place	Small.	None.	1 or 2	cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Fence post	Small.	Some preparation required to stack the cans inside.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Fire-alarm handle	Small.	None.	2	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Fire hydrant pipe	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Food miniatura	Small.	Some preparation required.	2 to 4, depending on cleaning crews, animals and homeless people.	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Free hotel room	Any size.	Some preparation & some clout required	5, though not anonymous.	cache. Also one-way or two-way if key is exchanged.
Friend's house	Any size.	Need to arrange it with friend first.	5, though not fully anonymous.	long-term cache
Furniture store	Small.	None.	3	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Garbage cans	Any size.	None.	3 to 5, depending on method used.	cache, one-way, two-way
Gas station, outskirts of	Small or medium.	None.	3 to 5, depending on the place.	cache, one-way, two-way
Golf course	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Guard rail	Small.	None.	4, but make sure onlookers don't see you or your car.	cache, one-way, two-way
Handrail, inside	Small.	Need a screwdriver to detach it from the wall.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Handrail, under	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Hanging planter	Small.	Some preparation needed.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Holiday decorations	Small.	Depends on decoration used.	3 or 4 depending.	cache, one-way, two-way
Homeless people	Any size.	Need to arrange it with the person.	4 or 5 if you find a trustworthy person to help you.	cache, one-way, two-way
Hotel front desk	Small or perhaps medium.	Very little preparation.	5, but little anonymity.	Primarily one-way but two-way is also possible. Cache may be done after allowing the desk clerks to switch shifts.
Hotel, furniture in hallways	Small.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Information desk	Any size, although depends on the employee.	None.	5, but anonymity is sacrificed.	Primarily short-term cache, but one-way or two-way may also be done.
Johnny-on-the-Spot	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Laundry basket exchange	Small or medium.	Have to arrange the contact with other party.	5, but anonymity may be at risk.	one-way or two-way transaction
Lawn ornament	Small.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Leaves in fence	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Library drawers	Small.	None, or some depending on method used.	4	cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Library shelf	Small.	None.	2 to 5 depending on the spot chosen.	cache, one-way, two-way
Light (on top of)	Small.	None.	2 or 3	cache, one-way, two-way
Light-switch panel (behind)	Small.	Screwdriver needed.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Log (with hollowed section inside)	Small.	Lots of preparation needed to create the log.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Lost and found	Any size.	None.	4	Primarily one-way; but cache or two-way is also possible.
Luggage	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Mail package to yourself	Any size.	Have to have ready the envelope and postage.	5	short-term cache
Mailbox	Small or medium-small.	None.	5	short-term cache or one-way
Microfilm box	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Mini-storage	Any size.	Have to rent the space.	5, but anonymity may be on the line.	cache; one-way or two-way with key exchanged
Miniatura	Small.	Have to prepare the container.	1-5 depending on the area, container chosen, weather, etc.	cache, one-way, two-way
Mirrors (behind)	Small and flat.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Molding (behind)	Small and flat.	None.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Newspaper box	Small or medium-small and flat.	Some preparation required.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Nursury	Small.	None.	Depends on method used.	cache, one-way, two-way
Package drop box	Small or flat-medium.	Need to know combination of the drop box.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Package Pick-up service at EPCOT	Any size.	Have to make a purchase there.	5	short-term cache or one-way
Paper-towel dispenser	Small.	None.	3	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Parking-meter pole	Small.	None.	4 or 5	cache, one-way, two-way
Parks and playgrounds	Small.	Depends on method used.	Depends on method used.	cache, one-way, two-way
Pay phone shelf	Small.	Some preparation required.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Peeling paint	Small, flat items or messages.	Some preparation required.	5	cache, one-way, long-term
Picnic table	Any size.	Have to set up the table and contact the other party.	5	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Pipes	Small or medium.	None.	3	short-term cache, one-way, two-way
Plant gravel	Small.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Portable Lock'R	Small.	None.	5, but conspicuous.	cache, one-way, two-way
Post-office box (or other rental box)	Any size.	None.	5, although anonymity may be sacrificed depending on method used.	long-term cache or one-way transaction

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Repair Vehicle	Mainly small, but larger if you find one unlocked.	None.	4	short-term cache, one-way, two-way transaction
Road kill	Small.	Good aim.	Probably not very safe, judging by the anecdote.	cache, one-way, two-way
Rock (fake)	Small.	None.	4 or 5 if mixed with other rocks.	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Safe-deposit box	Small or medium.	Need to rent the box.	5, but anonymity may be sacrificed.	long-term cache
Sandbag	Small.	A little preparation required.	3 or 4	cache, one-way, two-way
Sand-castle at beach	Small.	Some preparation required.	2 or 3	short-term cache or one-way transaction
Sandwich-board signs	Small and thin.	None.	2 or 3	Primarily for short-term cache, of short-term one-way or two-way.
School buses	Small.	None.	3 or 4 when school out of session.	cache, one-way, two-way
Sculpture	Small.	None.	2	cache, one-way, two-way
Sewer	Small or medium.	None.	3 or 4	cache, one-way, two-way
Shopping cart	Any size that fits in a shopping cart.	Need to set up the brush contact with other party.	5	Primarily used for one-way or two-way brush contact; short-term cache also possible.

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Shutters	Small and flattish.	Need duct tape or other attachment method ready.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Sidewalk vendor	Any size.	Some negotiation needed.	5, if you find a trustworthy person to help you.	cache, one-way, two-way
Siding	Small.	None.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Signs (behind)	Small, flat.	Some tape or other attachment method needed.	4 or 5	cache, one-way, two-way
Slates	Small.	Some time to dig hole and replace slate carefully.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Sneakers flung over street cable	Small.	Some preparation required.	4-5, but difficult to reach unless you're a small child or squirrel.	cache, one-way, two-way
Snow pile	Small to medium.	None.	3 or 4	cache, one-way, two-way
Spigot	Small.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Staircase (under)	Small.	Some preparation required.	2 to 4	cache, one-way, two-way
Stairwells (various places)	Small.	Usually none, depends on hiding spot.	4 to 5, but depends on hiding spot.	cache, one-way, two-way
Storage locker	Small to medium.	None.	5	long-term cache; key exchange allows one-way or two-way
Street lamp (in box at base)	Small.	None.	3, but beware of light.	cache, one-way, two-way

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Size	Transaction Types
Supra lock box	Small.	None.	5, but conspicuous.	long-term cache; one-way or two-way if combination is revealed
Taxicab exchange	Any size.	Need to make arrangements with the other party.	5, but your anonymity is in jeopardy.	one-way brush exchange
Telephone poles used as border	Small.	None.	3 to 5	cache, one-way, two-way
Theater seats	Small to medium.	Purchase seats and arrange with other party.	5, but care must be taken to ensure anonymity.	primarily used for one-way transaction, but short-term cache or two-way also possible
Tiles (behind)	Small and flat.	None.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way
Toilet (under)	Small.	Some preparation needed.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Toilet tank	Small.	Some preparation needed.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Traffic cone or pylon	Small to medium.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Trash by curb	Small to medium.	None.	4	short-term cache, one-way
Truck	Small to medium.	None.	4 or 5 when workers are gone.	cache, one-way, two-way
Utility box (fake)	Small.	Construct the box and hang it (or locate an open one).	5	long-term cache; one-way or two-way when key exchanged.

Hiding Place	Size	Preparation	Safety	Transaction Types
Vending Machine	Coins or bills.	None.	5	cache, one-way
Vending machine (in crawl space behind)	Any size.	None.	Depends on location.	cache, one-way, two-way
Video box	Small.	Procure a video box and make it ready for the video store shelf.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Video shelving (behind)	Small to medium.	None.	5	cache, one-way, two-way
Video tape return	Small.	Some preparation if you construct the tape yourself. Otherwise, none.	3	short-term cache, one-way
Waiting room	Small.	None.	5	short-term cache, one-way
Walkway (where lifted by tree root)	Small.	None.	3	cache, one-way, two-way
Wall (behind loose brick)	Small.	None or some.	4	cache, one-way, two-way
Washing machine	Small or medium-small.	Set up the washing machine and contact other party.	5	Primarily for one-way transaction, but also usable as short-term cache.
Wood sign (as in parking garage)	Small.	Some preparation required.	5	long-term cache, one-way, two-way

Appendix B
Simplex Lock Combinations

What follows is a listing of all the Simplex lock combinations. These combinations can be used to open UPS and Federal Express drop boxes, as well as any door, box, storage shed, or anything else that's locked using a Simplex lock. Only the full-press codes are given. Half-press codes are left as an exercise to the reader, as they say. The half-step codes are pretty much worthless anyway, since nobody uses them.

The way you use this list is, first find a Simplex lock you want to open. Then merely try each combination in turn until you find the combination that opens the lock. Most locks are set with one of the "Common Codes" given below. If those don't work, try the simple codes before moving on to the more complicated ones.

Some people will not need this list. Some people have a very logical, systematic mind and can churn out the codes one by one, remembering which they've tried and which is the next one in sequence. Other people, however, get flustered if they don't have it written down in front of them. It is quite possible (and usually pretty easy) to open drop boxes without this list. However, if you come across a particularly difficult lock, then it will be handy to use this list so to be sure you are not missing any of the combinations.

Another option is to tackle the lock with a friend. Let the friend read off combinations as you try each one. The friend also serves as a security guard to look out for people approaching.

Finally, a note on how to read the combination codes listed below. Press each number in the order given. If numbers are enclosed in parentheses, then those numbers should be pressed at the same time. For instance the combination **3 4 (2 5)** means that you should first press the **3** button, next press the **4** button, and finally press **2** and **5** together. Then turn the handle to see if the lock opens.

The handle will usually have an arrow on it to indicate in which direction it should be turned. After trying a combination, twist the arrow in that direction; if the box does not open, twist in the opposite direction to "clear" the lock.

Much gratitude to *2600* magazine for permission to reproduce this information which originally appeared in their fine magazine in a slightly different format.

Very Simple Codes

1	23	45	(24)
2	24	51	(25)
3	25	52	(34)
4	31	53	(35)
5	32	54	(45)
12	34	(12)	(51)
13	35	(13)	(52)
14	41	(14)	(53)
15	42	(15)	(54)
21	43	(23)	

Common Codes

(12) 3	(12) 5	(13) 4	(14) 2
(12) 4	(13) 2	(13) 5	(14) 3

(14) 5	2 (14)	134	345
(15) 2	3 (14)	135	351
(15) 3	5 (14)	142	352
(15) 4	2 (15)	143	354
(23) 1	3 (15)	145	412
(23) 4	4 (15)	152	413
(23) 5	1 (23)	153	415
(24) 1	4 (23)	154	421
(24) 3	5 (23)	213	423
(24) 5	1 (24)	214	425
(25) 1	3 (24)	215	431
(25) 3	5 (24)	231	432
(25) 4	1 (25)	234	435
(34) 1	3 (25)	235	451
(34) 2	4 (25)	241	452
(34) 5	1 (34)	243	453
(35) 1	2 (34)	245	512
(35) 2	5 (34)	251	513
(35) 4	1 (35)	253	514
(45) 1	2 (35)	254	521
(45) 2	4 (35)	312	523
(45) 3	1 (45)	314	524
3 (12)	2 (45)	315	531
4 (12)	3 (45)	321	532
5 (12)	123	324	534
2 (13)	124	325	541
4 (13)	125	341	542
5 (13)	132	342	543

Three Together

(123)	(134)	(234)	(345)
(124)	(135)	(235)	
(125)	(145)	(245)	

Four In A Row

1 2 3 4	2 3 1 4	3 4 1 2	4 5 1 2
1 2 3 5	2 3 1 5	3 4 1 5	4 5 1 3
1 2 4 3	2 3 4 1	3 4 2 1	4 5 2 1
1 2 4 5	2 3 4 5	3 4 2 5	4 5 2 3
1 2 5 3	2 3 5 1	3 4 5 1	4 5 3 1
1 2 5 4	2 3 5 4	3 4 5 2	4 5 3 2
1 3 2 4	2 4 1 3	3 5 1 2	5 1 2 3
1 3 2 5	2 4 1 5	3 5 1 4	5 1 2 4
1 3 4 2	2 4 3 1	3 5 2 1	5 1 3 2
1 3 4 5	2 4 3 5	3 5 2 4	5 1 3 4
1 3 5 2	2 4 5 1	3 5 4 1	5 1 4 2
1 3 5 4	2 4 5 3	3 5 4 2	5 1 4 3
1 4 2 3	2 5 1 3	4 1 2 3	5 2 1 3
1 4 2 5	2 5 1 4	4 1 2 5	5 2 1 4
1 4 3 2	2 5 3 1	4 1 3 2	5 2 3 1
1 4 3 5	2 5 3 4	4 1 3 5	5 2 3 4
1 4 5 2	2 5 4 1	4 1 5 2	5 2 4 1
1 4 5 3	2 5 4 3	4 1 5 3	5 2 4 3
1 5 2 3	3 1 2 4	4 2 1 3	5 3 1 2
1 5 2 4	3 1 2 5	4 2 1 5	5 3 1 4
1 5 3 2	3 1 4 2	4 2 3 1	5 3 2 1
1 5 3 4	3 1 4 5	4 2 3 5	5 3 2 4
1 5 4 2	3 1 5 2	4 2 5 1	5 3 4 1
1 5 4 3	3 1 5 4	4 2 5 3	5 3 4 2
2 1 3 4	3 2 1 4	4 3 1 2	5 4 1 2
2 1 3 5	3 2 1 5	4 3 1 5	5 4 1 3
2 1 4 3	3 2 4 1	4 3 2 1	5 4 2 1
2 1 4 5	3 2 4 5	4 3 2 5	5 4 2 3
2 1 5 3	3 2 5 1	4 3 5 1	5 4 3 1
2 1 5 4	3 2 5 4	4 3 5 2	5 4 3 2

Two Together, and Then Two More

(1 2) 3 4	(2 4) 3 1	5 (1 2) 4	3 (2 5) 4
(1 2) 3 5	(2 4) 5 1	2 (1 3) 4	3 (2 5) 1
(1 2) 4 3	(2 4) 5 3	2 (1 3) 5	4 (2 5) 1
(1 2) 4 5	(2 5) 1 3	4 (1 3) 2	4 (2 5) 3
(1 2) 5 3	(2 5) 1 4	4 (1 3) 5	1 (3 4) 2
(1 2) 5 4	(2 5) 3 4	5 (1 3) 2	1 (3 4) 5
(1 3) 2 4	(2 5) 3 1	5 (1 3) 4	2 (3 4) 5
(1 3) 2 5	(2 5) 4 1	2 (1 4) 3	2 (3 4) 1
(1 3) 4 2	(2 5) 4 3	2 (1 4) 5	5 (3 4) 1
(1 3) 4 5	(3 4) 1 2	3 (1 4) 2	5 (3 4) 2
(1 3) 5 2	(3 4) 1 5	3 (1 4) 5	1 (3 5) 4
(1 3) 5 4	(3 4) 2 5	5 (1 4) 2	1 (3 5) 2
(1 4) 2 3	(3 4) 2 1	5 (1 4) 3	2 (3 5) 4
(1 4) 2 5	(3 4) 5 1	2 (1 5) 3	4 (3 5) 2
(1 4) 3 2	(3 4) 5 2	2 (1 5) 4	4 (3 5) 1
(1 4) 3 5	(3 5) 1 4	3 (1 5) 2	2 (3 5) 1
(1 4) 5 2	(3 5) 1 2	3 (1 5) 4	1 (4 5) 3
(1 4) 5 3	(3 5) 2 4	4 (1 5) 2	1 (4 5) 2
(1 5) 2 3	(3 5) 4 2	4 (1 5) 3	3 (4 5) 2
(1 5) 2 4	(3 5) 4 1	1 (2 3) 4	2 (4 5) 3
(1 5) 3 2	(3 5) 2 1	1 (2 3) 5	3 (4 5) 1
(1 5) 3 4	(4 5) 1 3	4 (2 3) 1	2 (4 5) 1
(1 5) 4 2	(4 5) 1 2	4 (2 3) 5	3 4 (1 2)
(1 5) 4 3	(4 5) 3 2	5 (2 3) 1	3 5 (1 2)
(2 3) 1 4	(4 5) 2 3	5 (2 3) 4	4 3 (1 2)
(2 3) 1 5	(4 5) 3 1	1 (2 4) 3	4 5 (1 2)
(2 3) 4 1	(4 5) 2 1	1 (2 4) 5	5 3 (1 2)
(2 3) 5 1		3 (2 4) 5	5 4 (1 2)
(2 3) 4 5	3 (1 2) 4	3 (2 4) 1	2 4 (1 3)
(2 3) 5 4	3 (1 2) 5	5 (2 4) 1	2 5 (1 3)
(2 4) 1 3	4 (1 2) 3	5 (2 4) 3	4 2 (1 3)
(2 4) 1 5	4 (1 2) 5	1 (2 5) 3	4 5 (1 3)
(2 4) 3 5	5 (1 2) 3	1 (2 5) 4	5 2 (1 3)

5 4 (1 3)	5 3 (2 4)	2 1 (4 5)	3 (1 2 4)
2 3 (1 4)	1 3 (2 5)	(1 2 3) 4	5 (1 2 4)
2 5 (1 4)	1 4 (2 5)	(1 2 3) 5	3 (1 2 5)
3 2 (1 4)	3 4 (2 5)	(1 2 4) 3	4 (1 2 5)
3 5 (1 4)	3 1 (2 5)	(1 2 4) 5	2 (1 3 4)
5 2 (1 4)	4 1 (2 5)	(1 2 5) 3	5 (1 3 4)
5 3 (1 4)	4 3 (2 5)	(1 2 5) 4	2 (1 3 5)
2 3 (1 5)	1 2 (3 4)	(1 3 4) 2	4 (1 3 5)
2 4 (1 5)	1 5 (3 4)	(1 3 4) 5	2 (1 4 5)
3 2 (1 5)	2 5 (3 4)	(1 3 5) 2	3 (1 4 5)
3 4 (1 5)	2 1 (3 4)	(1 3 5) 4	1 (2 3 4)
4 2 (1 5)	5 1 (3 4)	(1 4 5) 2	5 (2 3 4)
4 3 (1 5)	5 2 (3 4)	(1 4 5) 3	1 (2 3 5)
1 4 (2 3)	1 4 (3 5)	(2 3 4) 1	4 (2 3 5)
1 5 (2 3)	1 2 (3 5)	(2 3 4) 5	1 (2 4 5)
4 1 (2 3)	2 4 (3 5)	(2 3 5) 1	3 (2 4 5)
5 1 (2 3)	4 2 (3 5)	(2 3 5) 4	1 (3 4 5)
4 5 (2 3)	4 1 (3 5)	(2 4 5) 1	2 (3 4 5)
5 4 (2 3)	2 1 (3 5)	(2 4 5) 3	
1 3 (2 4)	1 3 (4 5)	(3 4 5) 1	(1 2 3 4)
1 5 (2 4)	1 2 (4 5)	(3 4 5) 2	(1 2 3 5)
3 5 (2 4)	3 2 (4 5)		(2 3 4 5)
3 1 (2 4)	2 3 (4 5)	4 (1 2 3)	(1 3 4 5)
5 1 (2 4)	3 1 (4 5)	5 (1 2 3)	(2 3 4 5)

All Five Numbers Used (Extremely Rare)

1 2 3 4 5	1 3 4 2 5	1 4 2 3 5	1 5 3 2 4
1 2 3 5 4	1 3 5 2 4	1 4 2 5 3	1 5 4 2 3
1 2 4 5 3	1 3 5 4 2	1 4 3 5 2	1 5 4 3 2
1 2 4 3 5	1 3 2 4 5	1 4 3 2 5	2 1 3 4 5
1 2 5 3 4	1 3 2 5 4	1 5 2 3 4	2 1 3 5 4
1 2 5 4 3	1 4 5 2 3	1 5 2 4 3	2 1 4 5 3
1 3 4 5 2	1 4 5 3 2	1 5 3 4 2	2 1 4 3 5

2 1 5 3 4	3 4 1 2 5	5 1 2 3 4	(1 3) 2 4 5
2 1 5 4 3	3 4 1 5 2	5 1 2 4 3	(1 3) 2 5 4
2 3 4 5 1	3 4 2 5 1	5 1 3 2 4	(1 4) 5 2 3
2 3 4 1 5	3 4 2 1 5	5 1 3 4 2	(1 4) 5 3 2
2 3 5 1 4	3 5 1 2 4	5 1 4 2 3	(1 4) 2 3 5
2 3 5 4 1	3 5 1 4 2	5 1 4 3 2	(1 4) 2 5 3
2 3 1 4 5	3 5 2 4 1	5 2 3 1 4	(1 4) 3 5 2
2 3 1 5 4	3 5 2 1 4	5 2 3 4 1	(1 4) 3 2 5
2 4 5 1 3	3 5 4 1 2	5 2 4 1 3	(1 5) 2 3 4
2 4 5 3 1	3 5 4 2 1	5 2 4 3 1	(1 5) 2 4 3
2 4 1 3 5	4 1 2 3 5	5 2 1 3 4	(1 5) 3 4 2
2 4 1 5 3	4 1 2 5 3	5 2 1 4 3	(1 5) 3 2 4
2 4 3 5 1	4 1 3 5 2	5 3 4 1 2	(1 5) 4 2 3
2 4 3 1 5	4 1 3 2 5	5 3 4 2 1	(1 5) 4 3 2
2 5 1 3 4	4 1 5 2 3	5 3 1 2 4	(2 3) 4 5 1
2 5 1 4 3	4 1 5 3 2	5 3 1 4 2	(2 3) 4 1 5
2 5 3 4 1	4 2 3 1 5	5 3 2 1 4	(2 3) 5 1 4
2 5 3 1 4	4 2 3 5 1	5 3 2 4 1	(2 3) 5 4 1
2 5 4 1 3	4 2 5 1 3	5 4 1 2 3	(2 3) 1 4 5
2 5 4 3 1	4 2 5 3 1	5 4 1 3 2	(2 3) 1 5 4
3 1 2 4 5	4 2 1 3 5	5 4 2 1 3	(2 4) 5 1 3
3 1 2 5 4	4 2 1 5 3	5 4 2 3 1	(2 4) 5 3 1
3 1 4 5 2	4 3 5 1 2	5 4 3 1 2	(2 4) 1 3 5
3 1 4 2 5	4 3 5 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	(2 4) 1 5 3
3 1 5 2 4	4 3 1 2 5	(1 2) 3 4 5	(2 4) 3 5 1
3 1 5 4 2	4 3 1 5 2	(1 2) 3 5 4	(2 4) 3 1 5
3 2 4 5 1	4 3 2 1 5	(1 2) 4 5 3	(2 5) 1 3 4
3 2 4 1 5	4 3 2 5 1	(1 2) 4 3 5	(2 5) 1 4 3
3 2 5 1 4	4 5 1 2 3	(1 2) 5 3 4	(2 5) 3 4 1
3 2 5 4 1	4 5 1 3 2	(1 2) 5 4 3	(2 5) 3 1 4
3 2 1 4 5	4 5 2 1 3	(1 3) 4 5 2	(2 5) 4 1 3
3 2 1 5 4	4 5 2 3 1	(1 3) 4 2 5	(2 5) 4 3 1
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Appendix C: Vendors Mentioned in This Book

The following addresses, phone numbers, and item availabilities were checked for accuracy at time of publication.

2600 Magazine

2600 Magazine: the hacker's quarterly publication is available from:

2600 Enterprise, Inc.
Box 752
Middle Island, NY 11953-0752
Telephone: (516) 751-2600

Domestic subscriptions cost $21 per year; overseas subscriptions cost $30.

Novelty Items

Video Tape Safes, Secret Compartment Rocks, Dog Poop Key Covers and Foul Stench Spray are available from:

Johnson Smith Company
Things You Never Knew Existed... and other items you can't POSSIBLY live without!
4514 19th Street Court East
Box 25500
Bradenton, FL 34206-5500
Telephone: (941) 747-2356/Fax: (941) 746-7896

Call, write or fax for a free catalog.

Luggage Locks

PrivaSeal, Flite-Tight, as well as other locks, baggage, and travel accessories are available from:

Magellan's
Box 5485
Santa Barbara, CA 93150-5485
Telephone: (800) 962-4943
Call or write for a free catalog.

Portable Lock'R

The Portable Lock'R is available from stores, or you can order it through the mail by calling:

(800) 828-1438
Call for a catalog and price list.

Video Stuff

Video supplies such as empty videotape shells, silver security stickers of various kinds, and screws that can't be unscrewed (and the screwdrivers that screw them in), are sold here. The unscrewable screws are good if you've made your own videotape safe. Screw it together with those unscrewable screws and anyone who needs to get inside your safe — is screwed! This catalog also sells other unrelated cool stuff such as fake security cameras, neon signs and gumball machines:

Specialty Store Services
Video Store Services
6115 Monroe Court
Morton Grove, IL 60053
Telephone: (800) 999-0771
"¡Se Habla Español!"
Call or write for a free catalog.

Bibliography

Abagnale, Frank W Jr, *Catch Me If You Can*. Grosset & Dunlap, New York: 1980. Intriguing boasts about this man's life of deceptions.

Allen, Thomas B and Polmar, Norman. *Merchants of Treason: America's Secrets for Sale*. Delacorte Press, New York: 1988. Real-life spy story that makes good use of public hiding. This book contains several FBI photos of containers used for dead drops, and instructions to the agent on how to find them.

Bastone, William. "The Wrath of Leona: The Queen of Mean Rules — Even Behind the Wall" in *The Village Voice*. February 1, 1994. All Helmsley references from article on page 38.

Copeland, Miles. *The Real Spy World*. Sphere Books Limited, London: 1978. Source for the information on different kinds of dead drops and brush contacts.

Deacon, Richard. *Spyclopedia: The Comprehensive Handbook of Espionage*. William Morrow, New York: 1987. Source of the anecdote about a spy whose drop spot was closed off by park workers.

eddie the wire. *How to Bury Your Goods*. Loompanics Unlimited; Port Townsend, Washington: 1987. Recom-

mended reading for anyone who wants an in-depth look at burying objects, which is another way to hide things in public places.

Fisher, Jim. *The Lindbergh Case.* Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, New Jersey: 1987. Probably the most comprehensive account of this famous kidnapping case, told from beginning to end as a story.

George, Jean Craighead. *My Side of the Mountain.* Puffin Books, New York: 1959. Wilderness-survival training course in the form of a great children's novel.

Hoch, Edward D. *The Thefts of Nick Velvet.* The Mysterious Press, New York: 1978. Edward D. Hoch has had a mystery story published in every issue of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* since 1963. He is a master of the craft (or at least, usually entertaining), and very creative considering his enormous output. This volume is recommended for that creativity.

Hoffman, John. *The Art and Science of Dumpster Diving.* Loompanics Unlimited; Port Townsend, Washington: 1993. A great book filled with cool stories and plenty of good advice on finding treasures in trash.

Kessler, Ronald. *Spy verses Spy: Stalking Soviet Spies in America.* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York: 1988. Contains the anecdote about the beer can and fence used for dead drops.

Koenig, David. *Mouse Tales: A Behind-the-Ears Look at Disneyland.* Bonadventure Press; Irvine, California: 1994. A neat, fast read, but I wish the book had been more about the real behind-the-scenes stuff and less about injuries and lawsuits against the park.

Kuzichkin, Vladimir. *Inside the KGB:My Life in Soviet Espionage.* Pantheon Books, New York: 1990. Involving

autobiography of this spy's life inside the KGB. Contains interesting information about how they use public hiding to perform their transactions.

Project on Disney. *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World.* Duke University Press, Durham: 1995. A collection of essays on Disney. Oftentimes frustratingly asinine, pedantic, or just plain stupid, but containing a lot of cool inside information as well.

Réage, Pauline. *Confessions of O.* The Viking Press, New York: 1975. An interview with the author of the infamous S&M novel, *Story of O.*

Sehlinger, Bob. *The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World 1996 Edition.* Macmillan, New York: 1996.

Skinner, Scott and Goldstein, Emmanuel. "Simplex Locks: An Illusion of Security" in *2600 Magazine.* Autumn 1991. Ground-breaking article on the problem with Simplex locks.

Suvorov, Viktor. *Inside the Aquarium: The Making of a Top Soviet Spy.* Macmillan Publishing Company, New York: 1986. This is the Soviet spy who suggested using a dead cat to keep away unwanted visitors from his public hiding places.

Trudeau, Kevin. *Kevin Trudeau's Mega Memory.* Nightingale-Conant Corporation; Niles, Illinois: 1991. The advice about asking questions to retreive lost memories was taken from the bonus tape in this series titled "How to Remember Everything In Your Past."

Winograd, Eugene and Soloway, Robert M. "On Forgetting the Locations of Things Stored in Special Places" in *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General.* Vol 115, No. 4: 1986. pp 366-372. Technical study — the title says

it all. Also suggests some techniques for regenerating lost memories of hiding spots.

Interviews and Thank Yous

In non-partisan alphabetical order, I would like to thank Vladimir K for his ideas on street vendors; Detective James Marshall for his anecdotes about the Sears van and roadkill surprise; Pat Patel for his suggestions for hiding places and assistance with the photographs; Pysche for the loan of the gun and ideas; Sex Pack for her help in the Concealment Project; the guys at the camera store who got me out of many photographic jams; and Loompanics Unlimited for taking a casual comment in a conversation and turning it into a book. Happy hiding to you all, and thank you for reading this book!